

BEFORE THE  
CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS (BSA)

In the matter of

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC)  
Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300  
Sacramento, CA 95814

TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2010

1:01 P.M.

Reported by:

Peter Petty

## APPEARANCES

### Members Present

Nasir Ahmadi, Chair

Mary Camacho, Vice Chair

Kerri Spano, Panel Member

### Staff Present

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Panel Counsel

Diane Hamel, Executive Secretary

### Candidates

Peter Sunway Yao

Cecilia White

Thais Armenta

## I N D E X

	Page
Proceedings	4
ITEM 5. Applicant Interviews	4
Peter Sunway Yao	4
Cecilia White	60
Thais Armenta	113
Recess	181
Certificate of Reporter	182

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
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P R O C E E D I N G S

AUGUST 24, 2010 1:01 P.M.

MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's 1:01, let's go back on record.

We have with us Peter Yao. And, Mr. Yao, are you ready to begin?

MR. YAO: I am, thank you.

MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock. What specific skills do you believe a good Commissioner should possess? Of those skills which do you possess, which do you not possess and how will you compensate for it?

Is there anything in your life that would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of the duties of a Commissioner?

MR. YAO: When I sit on the city council I often tell the residents that come up to the mike, saying, if you heard something that other people have said, just said ditto, as compared to repeating it. So, I'm going to listen to my advice.

I have listened to about five or six individuals worth on the videotape and, therefore, I'm saying that the skills like listening, being able to listen to what other panelists and other speakers have to say; being analytical, having a good ability to questioning; being

1 respectful to the speakers; having skill in managing  
2 staff; and being a good team player, these are all the  
3 things that I said ditto to, I think those are all  
4 important skills.

5 But I'd like to add four more that I think are  
6 important. I think the panelists need to have the ability  
7 not only just defining the objective of the task, but also  
8 being able to quantify these objectives, able to  
9 prioritize the objectives and also being able to find  
10 means to measure the results in terms of how well the team  
11 is meeting these objectives.

12 The second skill I think a panelist should  
13 possess is having to make decisions on 124 panels, in  
14 approximately 200 working days, we need to come up with a  
15 process, come up with a process rather quickly and make  
16 sure it's a good process so that we can get the job done  
17 as compared to having to look at each one of the  
18 districts, and coming up with a way in dealing with the  
19 particulars.

20 The third item has to do with have some  
21 realistic expectation of the outcome. We have limited  
22 time, we have limited budget and so the skill that one  
23 needs to have is be able to keep an eye on the overall  
24 picture, or overall task, while paying attention to the  
25 individual details of performing the task.

1               We need to define what the minimum standard that  
2 we have to meet and proceed, and get the work done.

3               And the last, which I think also would be  
4 important is to be able to make decisions without having  
5 all the datas, all the necessary datas that we need or  
6 like to have. I think that panelists need to make  
7 educated and reasonable assumptions and then proceed in  
8 making the decisions accordingly.

9               In talking about the skills, I possess the  
10 skills to do all the things I mentioned previously.

11              The areas that I am lacking is in being able to  
12 work to the letters of the law. I do make an attempt to  
13 understand the intent of all the laws that are required to  
14 follow, but I am not one that's well qualified to meet the  
15 exact letters of the law. So, in that area I would  
16 solicit help in carrying out my duties.

17              And I don't see any restrictions in me being  
18 able to perform all the duties of a Commissioner. I am  
19 retired, my time is my own and I'd love to be able to work  
20 on this task.

21              MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
22 from your personal experience where you had to work with  
23 others to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion.  
24 Please describe the issue and explain your role in  
25 addressing and resolving the conflict?

1           If you are selected to serve on the Citizens  
2 Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would resolve  
3 conflict that may arise among the Commissioners?

4           MR. YAO: The way I see this issue of difference  
5 of opinion is really, in my opinion, a difference of  
6 perspective and a difference in the priority of the  
7 different objective one place weights on.

8           So, what I normally attempt to do is to  
9 understand where the individual is coming from, try to  
10 understand as to how they see things, what things are  
11 important to them.

12           And in terms of resolving the conflict, I always  
13 look for a middle ground. I try to come up with solutions  
14 that we all can live with, as compared to the solution  
15 that we'd all like to have, or the solutions that we must  
16 demand.

17           An example is dealing with the affordable  
18 housing issue in my community. Claremont is a fairly well  
19 to-do community, average income is very high and  
20 affordable housing is not something that we have had in  
21 the city. After I got on the city council, I realized  
22 that very important criteria in being able to keep the  
23 quality of lively up in Claremont is to have a economic  
24 diversity in our residents.

25           A lot of people that work in the cities cannot

1 afford to live in the city and when it comes to the term  
2 of affordable housing, it's really a workforce housing as  
3 compared the term we're required to use, affordable  
4 housing, in order to get the grants and on, and on that we  
5 need to support it.

6           So, in term of the conflict resolution, working  
7 with other council members and communities, as I said, I  
8 tried to understand as to where they're coming from.

9           If council member is facing a re-election, then  
10 some of these tough decisions may or may not be able to  
11 make in that time periods because some of the immediate  
12 concern outweigh the long-term concerns of the city, so  
13 we'll try to postpone that discussion until a time when  
14 these restrictions are off the table.

15           Another example is in deciding whether we keep  
16 an old building, called our Packing House, when we had to  
17 make that economic decision. The city owned an old orange  
18 packing house over the last ten years, and that building  
19 has been vacant for the last 40 years, roof is about ready  
20 to cave in and it's sitting in the middle of the downtown.  
21 A lot of council members and residents want to sell that  
22 building because Hilton had made us a very attractive  
23 offer, so we can put a few million dollars in the city  
24 coffer.

25           And at the same time, this is the last of the



1 orange packing house, if we were able to restore it, it  
2 would be an attractive destination point for visitors to  
3 Claremont.

4 And so, again, depending on the perspectives,  
5 people have different views and we were able to discuss  
6 all the issues and vote on that, accordingly.

7 So, there really is not such a term as a  
8 conflict, rather than being able to understand where each  
9 are coming from and coming up with a decision that we can  
10 all live with.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
12 work impact the State? Which of these impact will improve  
13 the State the most? Is there any potential for the  
14 Commission's work to harm the State and, if so, in what  
15 ways?

16 MR. YAO: Again, using my ditto concept, I ditto  
17 the comments made previously by other applicants on  
18 minimizing safe districts, and increasing the voter  
19 turnouts, those are clearly positives impacts that I  
20 foresee with the Prop. 11.

21 I'd like to address the macro impact, instead.  
22 I think Dan Walters, the columnist for Sacramento Bee has  
23 stated many times that 19<sup>th</sup> Century structure government is  
24 here trying to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in California.

25 And I think that, all in all, is the long-term

1 problem that we're starting to solve.

2 I'm optimistic that Prop. 11 is the first act,  
3 and by the nature of the name of the act, of changing this  
4 structure so that we can start migrating to the structures  
5 that we need or come closer to the current need of the  
6 State.

7 Now, realizing that there are a lot of special  
8 interest group and there are a lot of individuals that are  
9 going to have concern about Prop. 11, Prop. 27 is already  
10 qualified on the November ballot to kill the Prop. 11, and  
11 so that shows that not everybody welcome what we're doing.

12 And, furthermore, every Legislator that are  
13 holding office in their quote/unquote safe district, is  
14 going to have reservation about any changes that we make.

15 So, I think what's important is to make sure  
16 that we do our work well, make sure that we are ready for  
17 any legal challenges.

18 And the negative impact that I foresee is that  
19 we don't do a good job, that we allow our decisions to be  
20 successfully challenged in court and tie up the system,  
21 then the change of process that we're starting, that we're  
22 initiating with Prop. 11 will likely get delayed, if the  
23 worse scenario sees.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation  
25 where you've had to work as a part of a group to achieve a

1 common goal? Tell us about the goal, describe your role  
2 within the group, and tell how the group worked or did not  
3 work collaboratively to achieve the goal?

4 If you are selected to serve on the Citizens  
5 Redistricting Commission, tell us what you would do to  
6 foster collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure  
7 that it meets its legal deadlines?

8 MR. YAO: In terms of an example, something that  
9 just took place in the last couple weeks was our Los  
10 Angeles County Library Commission.

11 The task before us was to decide whether we  
12 should or should not try to increase the property tax to  
13 fund the library services, exclusively, knowing that the  
14 library typically is the lowest priority in most cities  
15 and counties, therefore, being one of the easiest funding  
16 to cut in being able to support the, quote/unquote,  
17 greater demand services, like public safety and other  
18 services.

19 It's the few of us on the Library Commission is  
20 tasked to decide as to what are going before the voter to  
21 increase the county property tax or the tax in the Los  
22 Angeles County to specifically cover the library services  
23 so that it doesn't deteriorate any further.

24 Going into the meeting I had a concern about  
25 asking the public for additional tax burden in light of

1 the economy and having gone through a lot of budget cuts,  
2 doing a lot of layoff in my own city, we are concerned as  
3 to whether that's the best use if we were to get  
4 additional tax funding.

5 So, that was a lot of reservation, reluctance  
6 going into this particular meeting and the first few  
7 minutes in the meeting tend to go in that direction.

8 And then we start asking ourselves as to, all  
9 right, how important is the library services? We end up  
10 finding that the library use, over the difficult times  
11 that we're facing, actually have gone way up. People see  
12 the library as their last resort in terms of having  
13 computers that they can use, having references that they  
14 can use, and even kids, homeless kids are coming to the  
15 library to use the books that they can't afford to buy for  
16 their schools, and on and on.

17 So, we soon realized that our library service is  
18 really not just an amenity, it is really a very necessary  
19 thing that we need to keep going.

20 So, at that point the discussion go toward as to  
21 what can we do? Well, we further got off the point and  
22 start discussing where else can we raise revenue.

23 But at the end of it, to keep the story short,  
24 we have learned Northern California has had successes in  
25 terms of library being able to go out and solicit the

1 funding and local cities have had success stories to  
2 pursue funding, exclusively, for the library.

3           So, by the conclusion of the meeting all of us  
4 start coming together saying if we do these types of  
5 things, isolate the library expenses away from city, away  
6 from county and make sure that the funding that we ask for  
7 go directly to the operating costs of the library and  
8 appeal to the common sense of all the voters.

9           And so, the decision, instead of saying, no, we  
10 shouldn't tax, increase the tax in this economy, end up  
11 saying that I think we need to do what we can to preserve  
12 what we have.

13           So, the overall tone of coming to achieving a  
14 common goal is not getting what you want, rather making  
15 sure that we discuss all the points that are necessary in  
16 coming up with a good decision.

17           And during that whole meeting I find myself  
18 arguing both sides of the point. When the discussion's  
19 going too far in one direction, then I will start bringing  
20 up some of the points that would counter it, so that we  
21 can generate some true discussion.

22           So, all in all, that's typically how I would  
23 proceed in terms of achieving a common goal.

24           And having worked with a number of teams over a  
25 long period of time --

1 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

2 MR. YAO: Five minutes.

3 Having worked with teams over a long period of  
4 time, if time permits, you want to get to know the  
5 individuals and find common point of interest, find common  
6 grounds, and build relationship, and then proceed to get  
7 the work done on the Commission.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
9 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
10 from all over California, who come from very different  
11 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
12 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
13 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
14 in interacting with the public?

15 MR. YAO: Very early in my engineering career I  
16 end up having to deal with a lot of individuals from not  
17 only across the State, but across the country.

18 In one situation I start managing a  
19 manufacturing operation in Mississippi and find out that  
20 when I hold the meeting in the normal way that I run the  
21 meeting in California, I couldn't get the same results  
22 because the culture there is you don't offend your guests,  
23 and I was looked upon as a guest coming into Mississippi.  
24 And every answer I get is a yes. When they mean no, they  
25 give you a yes answer.

1           So, these are some of the cultural differences I  
2 recognized very early on, and so I end up having to  
3 structure the questions, structure the method of asking  
4 question to eliminate getting a yes/no answer.

5           Also, at another point in my career, as an entry  
6 level engineer I have a technician assigned to me, and  
7 when I asked the individual to come in and work overtime  
8 on a Saturday, in getting something done, the answer came  
9 back, sure, I'll be there.

10           And then I learned on Saturday, when I show up  
11 to work, that the individual call in and call in sick.

12           And so, what keeps anybody from calling in sick  
13 on Saturday? Well, I found out that there's no regulation  
14 against it.

15           So, I learned to, in casual conversation since  
16 that incident, trying to find out what people are doing  
17 over the weekend before I ask them whether they're  
18 available to work on the weekends.

19           So, throughout my whole career and as well as my  
20 years serving on the city council, I learned to recognize  
21 where people are coming from. I learned to sidestep these  
22 type of traps. I would ask for people to give me  
23 examples, if they're trying to tell me something very  
24 specific, and I try to ask them for a second example so I  
25 can really get them to the point they're trying to get

1 across to me.

2 So, I am sensitive to that people have different  
3 backgrounds, different perspectives, and I try to do my  
4 best to do that.

5 And I have dealt with people from all walk of  
6 life, economic, cultural, so I'm well prepared to deal  
7 with that particular issue.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi?

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you. Good afternoon,  
10 Mr. Yao.

11 MR. YAO: Good afternoon.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: I'm going to ask you a few yes  
13 and no questions, first, and then --

14 (Laughter.)

15 CHAIR AHMADI: In your application you state  
16 that you have relationships with the state and federal  
17 officials.

18 Are these relationships personal or an  
19 appointment kind of a situation?

20 MR. YAO: No, you cannot be an effective city  
21 councilman, or effective mayor, which I had served for a  
22 couple years, without building relationship with elected  
23 officials.

24 Simply is your city pay -- your city's residents  
25 pay out taxes to the State of California and pay a lot of



1 taxes to the federal government, and these kind of money  
2 typically are not spent by the state and not spent by the  
3 federal government, they come back to the community in  
4 forms of grants, and special projects.

5 So, in order to be effective in getting your  
6 fair share or a larger amount, you have to build  
7 relationship, and you have to network, and you have to  
8 make connection with these elected officials.

9 So, my knowing and my association with the  
10 elected official is strictly in the performance of my duty  
11 as a council member and as a mayor. I do not have any  
12 personal relationship with them.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: And no interaction with a member  
14 of the Legislature?

15 MR. YAO: We -- representing the city, we often  
16 do go and lobby on behalf of the city on things that we're  
17 interested in. But in terms of any other kind of  
18 relationship, I do not -- for example, I do not have any  
19 social relationship with any of them.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: So, you mentioned lobbying on  
21 behalf of the city to get a legislation passed, or get a  
22 bill signed. Can you tell me a little bit more about what  
23 you mean by lobbying?

24 MR. YAO: We write proposals for -- to apply for  
25 various grants that are offered by the State and by the

1 federal government. And after we submit the proposal, we  
2 take time out to approach the staff of the legislative  
3 office, make sure that they have received it, make sure  
4 that they understand what we have put down, and make sure  
5 they understand how important it is in our cities to  
6 receive that grant or that proposal.

7 And it's on that behalf that I would represent  
8 the city and approach the -- each of the office and each  
9 of the individual.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so it sounds like within  
11 the context of your official responsibilities on the city  
12 council?

13 MR. YAO: Absolutely, yes.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: No personal interaction with the  
15 members of the Legislature?

16 MR. YAO: No.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Or the Governor's office or his  
18 staff?

19 MR. YAO: No, I do not.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir.

21 You also, in your application you state that  
22 you're a member of many boards, commissions and various  
23 ethnic caucuses. Are any of these memberships appointed  
24 by the state or federal officials?

25 MR. YAO: No, sir.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you, sir.

2 In response to one of the standard questions, if  
3 I heard you correctly, you mentioned that you're now  
4 retired?

5 MR. YAO: Yes.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: And I'm sure that your  
7 application had been written before your retirement  
8 because it says that you're currently -- well, it says  
9 from 2003 to current you were the City of Claremont Mayor  
10 and Councilman?

11 MR. YAO: Yeah, the --

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Just clarify for me.

13 MR. YAO: Being a council member, being on the  
14 mayor, it's a voluntary position.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: It's a voluntary, okay.

16 MR. YAO: Yes.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you, sir.

18 MR. YAO: It's not a paid -- well, we don't get  
19 paid a hundred thousand dollars, but we do get paid \$400 a  
20 month.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Related to that, should  
22 you be selected as a Commissioner and should the  
23 regulations be adopted, if there is a requirement for you  
24 to step down from that position, would you be willing to  
25 do that?

1           MR. YAO: I have given that a great deal of  
2 thought since one of the applicants has withdrawn because  
3 of related issue.

4           I have been on the council now for -- this is my  
5 eighth year, I'm finishing up my second term. And the  
6 relevant question is to whether a third term would be --  
7 would be something that I would want to do, and I always  
8 have postponed that decision until the time that I have to  
9 make that decision. But if I have to make the decision  
10 today and given the opportunity to serve on the  
11 Redistricting Commission, I'll continue serving on the  
12 council, and if I have to make that decision I definitely  
13 would select the Redistricting Commission and resign from  
14 my capacity on the city council.

15           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

16           Just a follow-up question on your response to  
17 standard question number one.

18           MR. YAO: Sure.

19           CHAIR AHMADI: Again, if I heard you correctly,  
20 I believe you mentioned something about ability to make  
21 reasonable assumptions. Can you elaborate on that,  
22 please, and tell us what assumptions, if any, you will  
23 have to make should you be selected as a Commissioner?

24           MR. YAO: We're going to attempt to collect a  
25 lot of data in real time, based on the goals and

1 objectives that we set as part of the Redistricting  
2 Commission, I would imagine that would be the case.

3 And if staff is not able to collect the quantity  
4 of data that we need or the right data that we need, we  
5 would then have to look at other factors that are related  
6 to the data that we feel that we should have in making  
7 that decision.

8 Yes, the type of assumption, for example, let's  
9 say the sample size is too small, but that's the best we  
10 can do and we're just basically going to have to make the  
11 assumption that it's going to have to do and we have to --  
12 even with that small sample size, we're going to trust the  
13 data as being valid and proceed accordingly, as compared  
14 to insist on getting the full set of data and jeopardize  
15 not meeting the end date, the milestone, and jeopardize  
16 exceeding the budget that we have for the overall task.  
17 That's the type of assumption that I refer to.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: For what type of objectives you  
19 will use a sampling approach to reach a conclusion?

20 MR. YAO: How -- for example, how individual  
21 ethnic group feels the present system is either fair or  
22 unfair. I would want to get an idea as to what that  
23 particular community, the perception of that particular  
24 issue.

25 And, for example, things of this nature, I would

1 try to get some data on and I don't know at this point in  
2 time what is the right sample size. But in any case, I  
3 would say any data is better than no data and I would act  
4 accordingly.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: So, if I -- just to clarify that  
6 I understood correctly, if you have, for example,  
7 scheduled a public hearing in one of the cities in  
8 Northern California, for example, and you invite all the  
9 citizens in that city to attend to the public hearing so  
10 that they can share their thoughts and wishes with the  
11 Commissioners, let's say 50 people showed up in that  
12 hearing and then you will make a decision based on an  
13 assumption that the 50 people who showed up for the public  
14 hearing is a good representative of the community at  
15 large? Is that the kind of assumption that you would be  
16 making?

17 MR. YAO: No, no. I would want to -- or I would  
18 have an opportunity to see whether the 50 people that  
19 showed up in a meeting does or does not represent a  
20 community in general.

21 For example, let's say the Hispanic  
22 population -- there's a high Hispanic population in that  
23 particular region and very few Hispanics showed up at the  
24 meeting, then I would -- I would leave that particular  
25 meeting with a voice saying that we need to collect data

1 on the Hispanic population, as to what they -- how they  
2 see their need or their preferences in the redistricting  
3 criteria.

4 With the 50 people that are present and  
5 representing the group that I conclude that they  
6 represent, then I would basically apply to their comments  
7 to that particular group.

8 I know the squeaky wheel tendency, they're the  
9 one that dominate a microphone and they're the one that  
10 speak the loudest. I'm used to that phenomena, sitting on  
11 the city council, because that's when we deal with a  
12 particular matter it's those people that are directly  
13 impacted by it that would take time out to come out to the  
14 council that speak on that issue.

15 Whereas the people that are satisfied with the  
16 decision, they don't tend to make an effort to come out  
17 and argue the counterpoint. So, I fully recognize that  
18 phenomena.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir. I think I  
20 got it.

21 MR. YAO: Thank, you.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

23 I had another follow-up question about the  
24 realistic expectations I believe you mentioned, but I  
25 think you alluded to that, so thank you for that.

1           You have lived the immigrant experience and you  
2 have tremendous, you know, personal accomplishments. If  
3 selected for the Commission, how would you use that  
4 experience to engage communities in California to become  
5 more involved with the political process?

6           MR. YAO: I would find every opportunity to get  
7 the message across to the group of residents that are  
8 eligible to vote, and not vote, to get out and vote.  
9 Because to let them know that we are modifying the system  
10 so that it's tailoring closer to what they need. And I  
11 have done many occasions to speak to youngsters, in  
12 schools, that getting out to vote is their single most  
13 important civil responsibility in the community.

14           And while I may not talk to them specifically  
15 about exactly what we're doing and how we're going about  
16 it, but at the same time I definitely would get the  
17 message out, saying voting is a civic duty and it is a  
18 very important part of their obligation in living in this  
19 country.

20           CHAIR AHMADI: And how do you reach these groups  
21 of youngsters, within the city that you're a council  
22 member?

23           MR. YAO: One of the reason that I became so  
24 involved with the Asian caucuses at various level is it  
25 gives us -- give me and gives other council members, like



1 me, an opportunity to reach out to the group that we often  
2 have difficulty in getting to.

3           When we get a half a dozen elected officials  
4 together, in one room, we can call a press conference and  
5 we know for sure that the Asian newspaper will send a  
6 reporter out to cover it, and we know that -- or we can't  
7 on, very heavily, that the next day or two the message  
8 that we want to get out will show up in print, at almost  
9 no cost to us that are trying to get the message out.

10           So, those are the opportunity that we would  
11 seize to communicate with the group that we would like to  
12 communicate with on the issues that are important to us,  
13 like get out and vote.

14           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Just one kind of like  
15 follow up to that, can you tell us what is the  
16 demographics of these groups that you're speaking to?

17           MR. YAO: The Asian Caucus, specifically, is  
18 strictly targeting at the Chinese community. It's a very  
19 specific group and I know I, personally, don't have the  
20 ability to talk to the larger group of audience at will.

21           So, being able to this specific group of  
22 Chinese, and a lot of them are immigrants, first  
23 generation immigrants, is an area that I leverage.

24           It's not so much that I think that I should only  
25 talk to this group, it's just the fact that that is the

1 base that I have influence over, and I'm taking advantage  
2 of it in that capacity.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Got you. So, part of the  
4 responsibility of a Commissioner will be to present, you  
5 know, to large group of people from different backgrounds  
6 and ethnicities. Would you be comfortable to do that?

7 MR. YAO: I would be honored and pleased to have  
8 that ability to speak to a much, much broader base. And  
9 if people are interested in listening to me, I am more  
10 than ready to get the word out.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir.

12 I have to make a decision which question to  
13 have. How much time do I have left?

14 MS. HAMEL: You have five and a half.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Five and a half minutes. Okay,  
16 I'll be quick.

17 In your application you provide a good  
18 description of some of the issues and needs of various  
19 communities. How big a role does geographic location play  
20 in political preferences and how do these differences, how  
21 do these differ from region to region within California?

22 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

24 MR. YAO: In term of performing the task of the  
25 redistricting, I think the redistricting law pretty much

1 spell out exactly how we have to deal with the issue in  
2 terms of what is important and what is not important,  
3 okay. So, adhering to the law is a must.

4 But at the same time, living in various part of  
5 the State, living whether you're in a coastal area, or the  
6 inland area, whether you're in Southern California, or  
7 whether you're in mid-California, you do have different  
8 environments.

9 For example, while we think that we have a 10,  
10 12 percent unemployment is really bad in Southern  
11 California, in the area that I'm from, when you talk to  
12 somebody from the Central Valley, from the Fresno area and  
13 their unemployment already is hitting 40 percent, 45  
14 percent, you soon realize that keeping a business open in  
15 your downtown area is probably not as important as finding  
16 work for the residents in your city, any kind of work.

17 So, these are the type of scenarios that we need  
18 to be sensitive to because no matter how important  
19 something is, either to me, when I first entered the  
20 picture, it may or may not be one of the highest priority  
21 in a given region.

22 So, all those type of things is what I'm  
23 inferring when I said that people have different  
24 requirements, people have different -- living in different  
25 environments, living with different expectations and

1 understanding it is of paramount importance in order to be  
2 able to deal with the task at hand.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir. No more  
4 questions at this point.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, Mr. Yao.

7 MR. YAO: Good afternoon.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What did you do to increase  
9 the racial and ethnic diversity of the League of  
10 California Cities?

11 MR. YAO: I wish I have the ability to do that,  
12 I did not do that. My role as a part of the Asian Caucus  
13 is really to try to get the elected minorities, or the  
14 elected council members to get more involved with the  
15 League of California.

16 Often, the minority candidates, when they get  
17 elected, because of the population base in their community  
18 has reached a certain level such that they have enough  
19 votes to get on the city council, and many of them don't  
20 feel getting involved at the State level, at the League of  
21 California Cities level is important. Because it doesn't  
22 help them get elected, it doesn't help them in terms of  
23 dealing with the issues that they're addressing when in  
24 their own city.

25 So, my role as working on the Caucus, really, is

1 to point out to them that it is just as important for them  
2 to be active outside of their city, as it is working  
3 within the city because there are a lot of opportunities  
4 and problems they need to be sensitive to and address in  
5 terms of improving the quality of life within their city.

6 So, that's my association and that's what I've  
7 been attempting to do as a part of the League of  
8 California Cities.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I also notice that you  
10 worked with various other caucuses.

11 Can you elaborate on the work that you -- or the  
12 joint activities that you did with these other caucuses  
13 and how will that help you as a Commissioner?

14 MR. YAO: When we looked at the board  
15 composition, the board of directors, when at the League of  
16 California Cities, it doesn't come anywhere close to  
17 represent the diversity of the State. When we looked at  
18 the composition of the board, it doesn't come close to  
19 representing the diversity of the elected officials within  
20 the State.

21 And when I'm talking about elected officials,  
22 I'm talking about the local elected officials to cities.

23 So, we find that we -- or we find that we  
24 probably should work together, the four -- the three  
25 minority caucus, as well as the lesbian and gay community,

1 in terms of convincing the League of California City  
2 executive board that modifying or start going toward the  
3 direction of having a diverse board is important and it is  
4 going to be a opportunity and constructive to the overall  
5 performance of the League of California City.

6 So, it's true that identification of need and  
7 through that common goal of changing the mix of the board  
8 directors in the League of California City, that we worked  
9 together. And by working together, one of the first  
10 objectives we have is to increase the influence -- not so  
11 much influence, increase the contribution of the League of  
12 California Cities to the -- I'm sorry, increase the  
13 contribution of the caucuses to the programming offered by  
14 the League of California Cities.

15 So, we basically roll up our sleeves and start  
16 getting involved more with the education process, with  
17 getting good speakers and doing these type of things to  
18 improve the program at the League of California Cities,  
19 because we think that's step number one in terms of being  
20 able to get to where we ultimately like to see change, is  
21 the composition of the board.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Since you're the vice  
23 president of the Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus, did you  
24 have meetings with these various other caucuses and  
25 discussions about this, or was this just an understanding

1 of the objectives that you wanted to push forward to the  
2 League of California Cities?

3 MR. YAO: In this past 12 months we've been  
4 holding telephone conferences on a monthly basis.  
5 Typically, we spend about at least 30 minutes, maybe  
6 approaching an hour on the telephone with each of the  
7 caucus represented and, typically, there's about 10 people  
8 participating in the telephone and discussing all the  
9 issues and all the topics that I mentioned previously.  
10 Yes, we have.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Earlier you talked  
12 about some involvement in the homeless community in  
13 Claremont.

14 How would your activities with Claremont's  
15 homeless relate to Commission's activities?

16 MR. YAO: The homeless is an issue that I  
17 learned, having been on the council and being involved  
18 with the regional organization, as well as the state  
19 conferences and the national conference.

20 The homeless is an issue that depend on  
21 communities working together in coming up with a solution,  
22 because we no longer can depend on the federal government  
23 and less and less likely we can depend on the state  
24 government in solving that problem.

25 And homeless, I learned, is really a regional

1 problem in that most of the homeless in our region  
2 originated from our region. And so, there's special  
3 interest in dealing with it.

4 And as with most community, they turn an eye to  
5 it, they basically feel that we do not have homeless. And  
6 it was a major effort to convince them that ten percent of  
7 the children attending public schools in Claremont, a very  
8 affluent community, are defined by the HUD as homeless,  
9 somebody that do not have a permanent place of residence.

10 I may forget the wording because I'm not sure I  
11 remember the exact question that you posed for me.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Would you like me to repeat  
13 it?

14 MR. YAO: Please, yeah.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Sure, no problem. How  
16 would your activities to Claremont's homeless relate to  
17 Commission activities?

18 MR. YAO: By being sensitive to the homeless  
19 issue, I have worked very -- worked with special  
20 interests, with the census people in doing, for example,  
21 the current census count. And I believe a homeless is  
22 part of our population base, is part of our community and  
23 they also have the voting rights.

24 So, I'm not sure exactly what I would do at this  
25 point in time in terms of addressing that specific



1 problem, but based on my limited exposure to the homeless  
2 issue, I think it is a group that has rights and should be  
3 included as part of our redistricting effort to make sure  
4 that they are counted when it comes to voting, the task of  
5 voting. Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You brought up that you  
7 worked with the census, I'm thinking to help count the  
8 homeless? Can you kind of elaborate on that?

9 MR. YAO: No. Being on the city council, the  
10 census people have briefed us on the very beginning in  
11 terms of how they're going to be doing the counting, what  
12 is it they intend to do, and they would ask for inputs  
13 from us as to what other -- what things the city can help,  
14 what things are -- where are some of the location that  
15 they should be present in order to get the word out. So,  
16 by helping, it's in those kind of capacities.

17 I have not rolled up my sleeves in terms of  
18 carrying a clipboard, or anything like that, to go from  
19 house to house and do the counting. It's internal of  
20 being able to put on the thinking cap and spending time to  
21 make some productive recommendation as to how to make that  
22 process work better.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And what were some of those  
24 recommendations that you provided to the census  
25 individuals?

1           MR. YAO: Well, knowing that a very sizeable  
2 percentage of the homeless population exists in our school  
3 district and the first people that would recognize these  
4 individuals are the teachers that have these students in  
5 their -- in the classrooms, so I have made recommendation  
6 to them to contact those individuals if such is important  
7 in terms for them to be able to get a good count of those  
8 people that are in the area, that are living in the area,  
9 even though they don't have a permanent address.

10           I wouldn't characterize my action as being  
11 heroic, anything like that, but I have given it serious  
12 thought and address it from that perspective.

13           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Were you responsible  
14 for Claremont being designated as one of the top places to  
15 live in the country and, if so, how?

16           MR. YAO: Luck has its opportunity and  
17 privileges. When I was the mayor in the City of  
18 Claremont, that was the year the Money Magazine came out  
19 with the survey of all the cities in the entire country,  
20 approximately 2,500 cities.

21           And of those that are classified as small  
22 cities, Claremont came out ranking as the fifth in the  
23 country. So, right away we get national exposure in terms  
24 of Newsweek broadcast. Chamber of Commerce got a lot of  
25 requests for relocation packages and we practically wore

1 out our Xerox machine in duplicating that article and  
2 distributed it to as many people as we know how to send  
3 these articles to.

4 I wouldn't characterize my activity as having  
5 anything to do with the Claremont winning the award. But  
6 having lived in Claremont for 50 years, I certainly,  
7 absolutely agree with the article in its entirety. And  
8 so, I was being lucky in being the mayor of the city when  
9 that article appears and I'm very proud of the fact that  
10 the City of Claremont is being recognized by outsiders as  
11 a good place to live.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. One of the comments  
13 in your application was that you've had to make decisions  
14 that you felt were right for the city, but unpopular to  
15 the residents. Why did the -- my question is why did you  
16 make those decisions and if you could give an example?

17 MR. YAO: Let me give the example, first. I  
18 think the homeless issue was one such type of issue. I  
19 think I already explained that my feeling is it's a  
20 regional issue, it's an issue that we need to address  
21 because there's no one else that's addressing it. And the  
22 problem will not go away by itself, you know, it just gets  
23 worse and worse.

24 And the people that I feel that are most at risk  
25 are not so much the adults, but the children, if they miss

1 out on school for two, three years, it's going to ruin  
2 their future on a permanent basis.

3 So, that was my motivation in terms of  
4 addressing the homeless issue.

5 And my thought process is I have given the  
6 opportunity to work as one of the five members of the city  
7 council, we can make some good decisions in terms of  
8 solving this problem, and if I do not leverage on that  
9 opportunity I wouldn't be doing what I am tasked to do,  
10 what I'm responsible to do. And holding the job, just for  
11 the sake of holding the job, is just not why I got elected  
12 to the city council.

13 So, as a result of my being on the city council,  
14 I proposed that we allocate about \$50,000 to the Faith  
15 Organization, so that they can in turn begin to address  
16 the homeless issue.

17 So, this is one such issue that everybody -- not  
18 everybody -- a lot of people in town feel that if you make  
19 it -- if you do more than your neighbor cities, then that  
20 will just attract more homeless coming to your city.  
21 You're not going to be solving the problem for the city,  
22 you're creating a bigger problem for the city.

23 But having weighed all the issues, you know, I  
24 pretty much have to go with my instincts, saying that you  
25 need to do the right thing. If I don't get re-elected, I

1 have had the opportunity to be able to address that while  
2 I am on the council, and I made a decision accordingly.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Do you believe that  
4 the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a necessary law and, if  
5 so -- or why or why not?

6 MR. YAO: the Voting Act was adopted in '64,  
7 '65, I probably wasn't as astute about politic at that  
8 point in time, I'm just beginning my engineering career,  
9 so I feel somewhat unqualified to address the issue or  
10 whether it should or shouldn't have.

11 But looking at it today, from the perspective  
12 that I have today, I think it is absolutely the right  
13 thing to do. Sometimes I question as to whether the color  
14 point approach, in other words making sure that everybody  
15 has the same opportunity and equalization, and as well as  
16 being able to have an equal ground when it comes to the  
17 voting opportunity is the right thing to do. Whereas the  
18 Voting Right Act specifically instruct us to pay attention  
19 to the race/ethnic issue so that we don't accidentally, or  
20 purposely or accidentally minimize the impact of the  
21 minority groups.

22 Having given that thought I, at this point in  
23 time, am in full agreement and in full appreciation of the  
24 Voting Right Act.

25 And furthermore, being the law, my conclusion is

1 we have absolutely no choice but to follow it to the  
2 letter, and so that's where it stands. My opinion doesn't  
3 count anymore when a law is in place telling us exactly  
4 what and how we have to take the race and ethnic issue  
5 into consideration when it comes to redistricting.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When you go out to the  
7 communities you'll be going and finding out the interests  
8 of the individuals and determining if communities should  
9 stick together or if they could -- they have more  
10 interests with somebody else.

11 How would you deal with an issue where Claremont  
12 would be divided between two districts?

13 MR. YAO: Based on the priority of the  
14 objectives defined from the redistricting law, I would  
15 definitely follow these priority and weigh the various  
16 options that we have in terms of how well they fit these  
17 objectives according to the priorities.

18 MS. HAMEL: One minute.

19 MR. YAO: Splitting a city in two is not the  
20 highest priority on that list, if I recall. And having  
21 the ability to weight that option based on -- based on  
22 these priorities, I think I would not have any difficulty  
23 to say it is better to split the City of Claremont into  
24 two separate districts as compared to keeping it within a  
25 single district. Again meeting the objectives, the list

1 of priority based on the importance is more important than  
2 how I think the residents of Claremont will feel or how I  
3 would feel on a personal basis.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. Good afternoon.

7 MR. YAO: Good afternoon.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Earlier you mentioned  
9 something to the effect that those who are satisfied tend  
10 not to argue and don't come out to public hearings.

11 When a Commissioner has the responsibility of  
12 going out to communities and trying to reach out to the  
13 population, and if certain segments of the population  
14 don't feel up, do you feel like they're satisfied with  
15 their district or do you feel like there could be  
16 concerns? And if there are, how would you tap into that?

17 MR. YAO: If I go into a community that I know  
18 nothing about, I would be reluctant in making any  
19 assumption of that nature as to whether they are  
20 dissatisfied or they are satisfied.

21 I probably would make some effort to find out  
22 how they have behaved in recent history, whether such a  
23 group tend to come out and speak to the school boards, to  
24 the council when they have issues, or whether they are the  
25 silent -- they become the silent minority or silent

1 majority.

2           So, once I have a little bit of information as  
3 to what their behavior is then I can start making  
4 assumption, making my assumption associated with it.

5           But if I sense that there is a need, then I  
6 probably would suggest that we make some effort, whether  
7 in an open meeting or whether going to the faith  
8 community, going to perhaps a church that most of these  
9 groups congregate and try to make a phone call to, and try  
10 to at least get some preliminary indication before I would  
11 proceed to make any assumptions.

12           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

13           You mentioned earlier about the composition of  
14 the Board of the League of California Cities, and you need  
15 to get members more involved because they don't represent  
16 the diversity of the State or its elected officials.

17           And I was curious to know what the demographics  
18 and makeup was of the board?

19           MR. YAO: Very close to the demographic makeup  
20 of what exists in the State Assembly and Senate today,  
21 mostly Caucasian -- I hate to say elderly because I fit  
22 into that group.

23           But there is very minimal age diversity in that  
24 group. And so, as I mentioned, these are some of the  
25 structural changes I think we need to make and I think we



1 need to go out of our way to get a representative body in  
2 order to make significant progress.

3 And not that having a diverse board or a diverse  
4 commission is necessary, it's at least -- based on what we  
5 know today, it's at least the first step that we need to  
6 take.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And in your opinion, what  
8 do you believe would be a good composition of a good 14-  
9 member Commission in terms of maybe its diversity, its  
10 background, its qualifications?

11 MR. YAO: I think the timeline and the intents  
12 that have been published by the redistricting panel, the  
13 redistricting -- not commission, but the committee that  
14 are tasked to make this happen is right on the money. I  
15 would not attempt to second guess that I have a better  
16 solution.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What would you like to see  
18 in your fellow Commissioners, any qualities in particular  
19 interest to you?

20 MR. YAO: I was going to go into that in my  
21 final comment, is I feel that in general all the  
22 candidates that I have listened to through the videotape,  
23 approximately six of them, that's eight hours of watching  
24 the monitor, are well-qualified, they're high achievers  
25 and they all have the right intent. So, I seriously doubt

1 that you can go wrong in picking any individuals from that  
2 group to be at the Commission.

3 But at the end of the day I think the challenge  
4 is that you have a big, big task and you have a very, very  
5 short period of time to do it, and you have to do it right  
6 the first time because you don't have any opportunity to  
7 go back and correct anything that you find out very late  
8 in the game, because you can't go back and revisit --  
9 revisit some of the early decisions.

10 So, some of the skills that I acquired as an  
11 engineer, working -- designing satellites, because once  
12 you launch a satellite, you can't send a repairman out to  
13 repair it or retrieve it to fix it, you have to do it  
14 right the first time. And there are many tools that we  
15 have developed, that we have used in the industry that are  
16 very applicable to what we're doing.

17 So, my specific contribution, I believe, is not  
18 so much the diversity that I would bring as part of my  
19 heritage, but the toolsets that I acquire from having deal  
20 with doing these type of things that nobody else has done  
21 before, being able to work with a highly skilled group of  
22 people and coming up with a solution that's going to meet  
23 the expectation of the voters and, more importantly,  
24 withstand any kind of legal challenge that we definitely  
25 will face down the road because of all the special

1 interest groups that I mentioned earlier.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What do you think these  
3 special interest groups would be challenged with in the  
4 drawing of the lines?

5 MR. YAO: It will always be the letter of the  
6 law. And I identified, as I said, I am probably not the  
7 best person to be able to precisely interpret as to what  
8 each and every letter means.

9 Having the right intention meets the requirement  
10 of the work, but being able to withstand the legal  
11 challenge is a concern.

12 An example of that is in the technology  
13 industry, with Intel and Microsoft, when they develop a  
14 microprocessor, a new generation of processor, the  
15 processor first of all has to have ten times the  
16 performance as the previous generation.

17 They hire a lot of engineers to design the  
18 product, but they hire more engineers to try to break the  
19 design that the first group of people designed, because it  
20 has to work right. You can't have -- you don't know how  
21 people are using it and it can't continuously crash and  
22 have to reset.

23 So, to some extent, I feel that we might need to  
24 do similar things on this committee is have a sizeable --  
25 have an adequate group of lawyers, working along with the

1 Commission to try to find faults with their decisions,  
2 with the approach that we take, so that we can anticipate  
3 and withstand the legal challenges down the road.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. You mentioned  
5 tools that you can apply to this, from your engineering  
6 career; can you elaborate on that?

7 MR. YAO: Well, one toolset is called a quality  
8 function deployment, QFD, for short. It basically is a  
9 tool that allow you to quantify or translate the  
10 qualitative type of things, touchy-feely type of things  
11 into a quantitative measure.

12 And the tool will allow you to weight your  
13 solution whatever the solution, whether it's associated  
14 with how to make the -- how to draw the line versus things  
15 that we need to do as part of the process in terms of how  
16 well we're meeting these touchy-feely type of  
17 requirements.

18 And the quality function deployment, by the way,  
19 is a tool that Toyota has adopted very early on when they  
20 entered the automotive market in the 1980s, and it is the  
21 single tool that contribute to their domination of the  
22 industry.

23 So, this toolset probably has a great  
24 application to what this committee could be facing in  
25 terms of doing the work that we have in mind. That's just

1 one of many, many toolsets that I would recommend.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And how would you apply  
3 that in redistricting, hypothetically?

4 MR. YAO: Obviously, we have many, many  
5 objectives and we can assign weights to each of the  
6 objectives. Like a simple way is let's say -- let's say  
7 the Redistricting Law has, I don't remember the exact  
8 number, let's say seven objectives on the following  
9 priority. Then a simple way is to, on reverse order,  
10 weight each of the objectives.

11 For example, the first objective has a weight of  
12 seven and the last objective has a weight of one, okay.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

14 MR. YAO: And then, now, when you come up with  
15 the solution, you basically have to ask the question as  
16 how well does the solution satisfy objective, number one,  
17 with the weight of eight? And then you can say high,  
18 medium or low, and they have a various weight of  
19 quantifying high, medium or low.

20 Some people would say, okay, assign three points  
21 to high, two points to medium, one point to low. Other  
22 people would say that, well, two medium doesn't equal a  
23 high, so they would assign, perhaps, a weight of nine to a  
24 high, a weight of three to medium, and a way of one to  
25 low.

1           And then by multiplying the kind of impact that  
2   solution has on the objective against the weight of the  
3   objective and then summing up all the measures, and then  
4   comparing the total number with all the other -- for both  
5   solutions, you get a firsthand or you get a quantitative  
6   measure as to how well they meet the total objective in  
7   general.

8           Now, you have to apply judgment to each and  
9   every one of these, you can't trust it on an absolute  
10   basis but it, indeed, is a tool to allow you to  
11   quantitatively evaluate how -- what the impact is  
12   associated with the objective that you do.

13           So, these are the type of tools that are used on  
14   a daily basis in the industry, these are not my tools, but  
15   that it definitely has application.

16           Nor, do I think that this is a science project  
17   and we need to treat it accordingly, but many tools are  
18   universal.

19           PANEL MEMBER SPANO:   Sure.

20           MR. YAO:   And I find that the cross-discipline  
21   approach of looking at problems is a good way of  
22   addressing the issue.

23           PANEL MEMBER SPANO:   Sure, thank you.

24           You mentioned, gosh, earlier in discussing --  
25   and I guess in the homeless issues, and getting people to

1 buy into the issue that there's a need here, that funding  
2 needs to be done for providing the homeless with certain  
3 needs.

4 How are the discussions that you participated in  
5 with the public, were they really contentious and how did  
6 you manage that?

7 MR. YAO: What I find is that trying to change  
8 the mind of an adult, especially those adults that are  
9 successful in what they do, is almost next to impossible.  
10 It's a -- but, instead, you look for areas that you have  
11 in common with the individuals that have concerns.

12 For example, with the business community, if I  
13 can show that we can minimize having homeless people  
14 residing on their property, that would be a positive thing  
15 for them, okay.

16 And by, for example, specifying the  
17 distribution, the food distribution point away from the  
18 downtown area, that would likely to be able to accomplish  
19 those kind of objectives.

20 So, you find areas that they see benefit and you  
21 see benefit. Now, it may not be the best, the easiest  
22 place for the homeless people to get to, but those are  
23 compromises and you -- you know, you try to reach it from  
24 that perspective.

25 With \$50,000 we're not going to be building

1 homeless shelters in the City of Claremont. So, for those  
2 people that have concerns about us building a lot of  
3 shelters, it's just simply not doing -- not doing that.

4 Like that may not be my objective in the long  
5 term, but in terms of getting the program going I'm asking  
6 for a very small amount of money and I sidestepped that  
7 particular landmine.

8 So, I think if one puts their mind to it, you  
9 can always find common grounds and you draw on the common  
10 grounds and that's how you get the decision or the  
11 projects going in the direction. It may take longer, but  
12 that's all right, as long as you're heading in the right  
13 direction --

14 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

15 MR. YAO: -- you're going to get there sooner or  
16 later.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. Thank you.

18 You were Director of Engineering at Raytheon  
19 Corporation?

20 MR. YAO: Raytheon, yes.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Raytheon. And is that  
22 where you developed the satellites or --

23 MR. YAO: The last job I had was responsible for  
24 what's called the power electronic. If I can simplify  
25 that, the power electronic is like the power source, it's



1 like the battery for your car, it's like the power supply  
2 that converts AC to a form of electricity. The circuits  
3 required, those are the power electronics.

4 So, the power electronic discipline that I was  
5 responsible spanned the entire product lines of Raytheon,  
6 which include commercial applications for satellite, as  
7 well as missiles, and radars, and all the electronics.

8 Previous to that I was mainly involved with  
9 radars, fighter radars, specifically.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In that environment, that  
11 corporate environment, what did you learn from that  
12 compared to your duties as councilman and mayor, in terms  
13 of one's government, one's corporate?

14 MR. YAO: I find that people do work to common  
15 goals and common objectives. And I find that it is very  
16 important to define the goals and objective clearly.

17 In the technical world, in the world that I work  
18 in my career, we have a very precise way of doing that,  
19 which is called specification, we're able to quantify that  
20 very precisely.

21 In the world of -- in the public world, that  
22 toolset is not available but, at the same time, we need to  
23 make it happen.

24 When we say affordable housing, it means  
25 different things to absolutely different people. And

1 before we proceed on tackling that issue, we need to spend  
2 time. So, spending a block of time up front to clearly  
3 define what it is and making sure that we focus on what it  
4 is that we define and embrace would set the stage for the  
5 rest of the project because that would minimize any new  
6 things from cropping up based on the lack of a common  
7 definition, or a lack of an understood definition.

8               So, I think that those are some of the things  
9 that I definitely gained from my years on -- in  
10 engineering that would apply to my work on the city  
11 council.

12               If I may elaborate for another 30 seconds?

13               PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Sure. Sure.

14               MR. YAO: My city had a general plan that was 20  
15 years old and it was rarely referred to. When I got on  
16 the city council one of the point I pushed is that we need  
17 to come up with a general plan, we need to put a lot of  
18 emphasis on it. As a result, we spent about five percent  
19 of the next years -- after I got on the council, we ended  
20 up spending five percent of our next year's total city  
21 budget in coming up with a general plan.

22               And a general plan involved a lot of citizens  
23 and it basically planned out what the city is going to be  
24 for the next --

25               MS. HAMEL: One minute.

1           MR. YAO:  -- 20 years.  And tried to institute a  
2 process where, instead of deciding whether something is  
3 good or whether an idea is good based on how we feel about  
4 it, is refer to the general plan and see how well it fits  
5 within the general plan.

6           So, the specification, defining the objectives,  
7 having a good plan up front, I think those are things that  
8 I translate from my career to my current job on the city  
9 council.

10          PANEL MEMBER SPANO:  Thank you.

11          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY:  Panelists, are there  
12 follow-up questions?

13          VICE CHAIR CAMACHO:  No.

14          CHAIR AHMADI:  No.

15          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY:  I have a number of  
16 follow-up questions for you.

17          MR. YAO:  Uh-hum.

18          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY:  You talked with Mr.  
19 Ahmadi a little bit about your elected position and your  
20 willingness to give that up, if you were chosen to sit on  
21 the Commission.

22          I noticed, though, in looking at your  
23 application, that it looks like you're involved in a lot  
24 of public boards, and commissions, and I don't know the  
25 details in terms of who appointed you to those positions

1 or the jurisdiction of those positions.

2 But as Mr. Ahmadi alluded, some regulations are  
3 being promulgated, now, by the Bureau, that if the  
4 analysis turned out that there was a requirement that you  
5 give those positions up as well, would you be willing to  
6 do that in order to serve on the Commission?

7 MR. YAO: Yes. It's being asked would you like  
8 ice cream or would you like cake? I think it's an honor  
9 to be asked, number one, and I don't think I have any  
10 reluctance in saying that I see my contribution to  
11 society, in general, is greater in my work on the  
12 Redistricting Commission as compared to what I have been  
13 able to accomplish and achieve in my smaller community.

14 So, on that basis, I absolutely have no problem  
15 giving up all the boards and organizations that I belong  
16 to and have been active in.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. And you also  
18 talked with Mr. Ahmadi about your professional connections  
19 to some members of the Legislature as a result of your  
20 work for the city. And I wanted to know specifically what  
21 legislative members were involved, as well as whether  
22 there was any staff from the Legislature, or the BOE, or  
23 the Governor's Office, or the Governor or BOE members.

24 MR. YAO: Definitely, with the Assembly members  
25 that represent my district, with the State Senators that

1 represent my district, I cross path with them often. They  
2 address me by my first name and I know that if I make a  
3 phone call to their office, their staff will probably  
4 treat it with a little more attention as compared to just  
5 putting it on the stack of phone calls that are coming in.

6 And those are the type of relationship that I  
7 have cultivated over the -- my past eight years in office.

8 And as I explained earlier, I see that is  
9 essential part of my duty as a council member, and as a  
10 mayor for the two years that I served.

11 Beyond that, I think once I'm out of office I  
12 think that connection will probably disappear altogether,  
13 because there will be a new council member, a new mayor  
14 that would try to continue that process.

15 And for them to see me in the same role, I don't  
16 think that's reality because I am -- my connection is  
17 based on my position with the city and not myself, as  
18 Peter Yao.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, you don't expect that  
20 they would reach out to you if you were on the Citizens  
21 Redistricting Commission?

22 MR. YAO: I don't know how they would act --

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, what if they did?

24 MR. YAO: -- but I think they understand -- they  
25 fully understand the rules of this game and I seriously

1 doubt that they would violate it or try to take advantage  
2 of it.

3 I certainly would not do otherwise, just because  
4 I have a connection with a particular individual in the  
5 Assembly, with the Senate, to try to get information that  
6 I need to make decision on the Redistricting Commission,  
7 outside of the formal channel that we agree to work with.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit  
9 about -- well, in various capacities over your  
10 conversation with the Panelists here, about voting being  
11 not only a right, but an obligation of living here, and  
12 talked a lot about how important the right to vote is and  
13 how important it is to exercise that.

14 I wonder, what about people who either can't  
15 vote or choose not to vote, what voice do they have in the  
16 redistricting process?

17 MR. YAO: Probably a secondary voice. For those  
18 people who have consciously decided not to vote, they  
19 probably have a totally different perspective and I doubt  
20 if I'm going to be able to change that perspective.

21 I think my influence probably would target,  
22 would focus on those that don't know any better, or don't  
23 take the time out, or are seeing it, as I mentioned  
24 before, priority, too low on their priority on making a  
25 daily living. Those are probably the group that I would

1 be more concerned about.

2           And with that particular group, as I mentioned,  
3 using the news media, using the faith community, through  
4 the kids in school are some of the non-standard channels  
5 of reaching them. A social setting is always a good  
6 forum, you organize a community party with food and  
7 drinks, not liquor, but sodas, they'll come out. And  
8 being -- setting up a table at 4<sup>th</sup> of July events, or such,  
9 they'll come out.

10           And if you give away a little bit of freebies, a  
11 decal, or a ruler, whatever it is, a shopping bag, they'll  
12 stop by. They'll stop by for a cup of lemonade and you'll  
13 have a chance to get your 30 seconds in with them. So,  
14 those are what I see as opportunity and methods of  
15 reaching them.

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How does California  
17 benefit from having its diverse population participate in  
18 the electoral process and how will you ensure that all  
19 Californians have an equal opportunity to effectively  
20 participate in the process?

21           MR. YAO: I do not know as a fact whether  
22 diversity is going to be the most effective means of  
23 getting the input, but I do know that it's probably the  
24 number one step that we all reach a conclusion that we  
25 need to take.

1           A case in point is whenever something is not  
2 going well, the number one step we often take is let's  
3 teach them how to do it, okay. The provide that we  
4 provide a class, the fact that we go through the meeting  
5 or the session and present the material to them does not  
6 guarantee that they're going to change their behavior,  
7 does not guarantee that they absorb what was presented to  
8 them.

9           But we do what we know how to do. We know how  
10 to put together a diverse organization and at this point  
11 in time we're working on the faith that having a diverse  
12 committee, a diverse Commission would give us a better  
13 chance of reaching, or a better chance of implementing the  
14 Voting Right Act, a better chance of getting  
15 representative input from throughout the State.

16           As time goes on I would hope that we have  
17 feedback and we have research data to show that we need to  
18 do something above and beyond just having a diverse  
19 Commission and hoping that we can achieve the outcome that  
20 we want to achieve.

21           But in the meantime I think the technology is  
22 that's the best that we know how to do and we're going to  
23 proceed with it.

24           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't think I have any  
25 further questions.



1 Panelists?

2 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I just want to make sure  
5 that I had my understanding correctly. When council asked  
6 you about people who choose not to vote or to  
7 vote -- or that they cannot vote, I just wanted to make  
8 sure I understood your answer. What did you -- how was  
9 your response to counsel?

10 MR. YAO: If somebody come up to me and say I am  
11 not going to vote, and state it in that strong fashion and  
12 when I say state in that strong fashion it is distinctly  
13 different than the I don't have the ability to vote, I  
14 cannot get to a voting place, I do not understand what I'm  
15 voting on.

16 When I made the statement, earlier, that they  
17 have decided not to vote, okay, I interpret that saying  
18 that that's my position, I have a right to do that, I  
19 understand that you think it's important but, to me, it's  
20 a waste of time, or to me it's I don't want to do it.

21 And it's in that light that I made my comment.

22 If there's anybody that have doubts about the  
23 benefit of voting, I would be the first one to point out  
24 to them as the importance of being part of the voice, part  
25 of the election process in a free and democratic society,

1 because every vote counts, every voice counts, and it's  
2 the collective of all these individual inputs that the  
3 government can perform what they are tasked to perform.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, when you go to these  
5 public meetings and various individuals attend them, are -  
6 - obviously, there's going to be various people there that  
7 either believe in voting, or don't believe in voting, or  
8 cannot vote. How would you decipher that information?

9 MR. YAO: Oh, if I don't have any inputs I  
10 would -- when I walk into a room, I would automatically  
11 make the assumption that their interested in the voting,  
12 in the voting process, they're interested in the  
13 Redistricting Commission's work in the redistricting  
14 process, and they're either there to learn or have  
15 something to advise us on.

16 So, I'm all ears when I enter that scenario and  
17 I will not make any assumption to the contrary. Just to  
18 make sure you understand what I meant when I answered that  
19 question previously, I was specifically referred to the  
20 scenarios of saying if somebody tells you that I don't  
21 vote and I will not vote, and it's on that basis that I  
22 answered that question.

23 So, voting is a fundamental right and obligation  
24 and being a naturalized citizen, I fully appreciate the  
25 privilege of being able to vote in this society, in this

1 community, in this country.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have one minute and 40  
4 seconds left, if you care to make a closing statement.

5 MR. YAO: Well, as I mentioned to you, this  
6 Commission has benefited from your -- the Panel's decision  
7 in terms of structuring the selection process the way it  
8 is and I want to say thank you to that.

9 And the few comments I made previously is  
10 diversity goes well beyond just the ethnic composition, as  
11 residents have pointed out to us on the council. There's  
12 the economic diversity, there's diversity in almost every  
13 aspect of life.

14 And to me, diversity is not just because the law  
15 or just because of the good feeling that we're doing the  
16 right thing, I think diversity offers opportunities.  
17 Diversity allow you to have new inputs that are not often  
18 available if you don't have that diversity.

19 So, on the basis of that let me just thank you,  
20 say thank you to you for allowing me to be part of this  
21 process, it has been fun and look forward to seeing how  
22 the whole decision process end up at the end of the game.

23 Thank you very much.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you. Let's recess  
3 until 2:44.

4 (Off the record at 2:31 p.m.)

5 (Back on the record at 2:45 p.m.)

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: The hour being 2:45 and a  
7 quorum being present, we have with us now Cecilia White.  
8 Are you ready to begin Mrs. White?

9 MS. WHITE: I'm ready. Can I -- can you hear?  
10 Okay.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.  
12 What specific skills do you believe a good  
13 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills which do you  
14 possess, which do you not possess and how will you  
15 compensate for it?

16 Is there anything in your life that would  
17 prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of the  
18 duties of a Commissioner?

19 MS. WHITE: Okay. I feel that the skills of a  
20 good Commissioner are organizational, time management,  
21 analytical, legal, technical knowledge, report writing,  
22 communication and team building.

23 And, fortunately, I believe I have all of those,  
24 so I'm not concerned.

25 And then talking about anything that would

1   impair, I didn't know. I talked to my husband, I talked  
2   to my family, I talked to my friends and I said  
3   anything -- do you know anything about me that you feel  
4   would impair my ability and they -- they didn't think  
5   there was anything at all.

6               Now, in order to get to what I thought would be  
7   good skills, I actually went through and analyzed the job  
8   and I broke it down into three different phases, but  
9   I'm -- if we have time, I'd be happy to go over how I  
10  broke it down.

11              MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
12  from your personal experience where you had to work with  
13  others to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion.  
14  Please describe the issue and explain your role in  
15  addressing and resolving the conflict?

16              If you were selected to serve on the Citizens  
17  Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would resolve  
18  conflicts that may arise among the Commissioners?

19              MS. WHITE: Okay. Now, that one makes me smile.  
20  Because I tell you, I worked for the Internal Revenue for  
21  27 and a half years, and that's 27 and a half years of  
22  conflict resolution.

23              So, because the job of an auditor, if you're  
24  auditors, it's a negative job. And people don't like to  
25  have their judgment questioned. And when you turn around

1 and you're talking about money, it's even more of a  
2 conflict.

3 So, when I'm talking my issue would be the  
4 conclusion of an examination. As an agent and as a  
5 manager, when I would review the results of the audit with  
6 the taxpayer, that was a period of conflict.

7 But the one thing, when I conducted the audit, I  
8 always kept the taxpayer informed, what I was doing, where  
9 we were, did he have any additional documentation that he  
10 could give me?

11 And then when the audit would conclude, I'd go  
12 over the results and I'd go over the law, and I would tell  
13 him or her, whoever, or the representative, or the  
14 attorney how the facts applied to the law. And then I  
15 would request their position, how did they feel about it,  
16 and then we'd either agree or agree to disagree.

17 And depending on whether the issue was material,  
18 immaterial, it would depend on what I would do.

19 Sometimes, if it was immaterial, it was not --  
20 as an auditor, we were not there to get the last dollar,  
21 we were there to make sure that they tried to comply with  
22 the law.

23 And so you would -- you know, if it was  
24 immaterial, you might let it go. You might have a bigger  
25 issue that they didn't agree to, but if you agreed to let

1 go the little ones, they would agree to the bigger one.

2           And I think, as a Commissioner, I think I would  
3 handle any conflict the same way. I would identify the  
4 issue or what is causing the conflict, I would look at the  
5 rules and the regulations that we have to follow, I would  
6 find areas of agreement, try to find where do we agree,  
7 and then I would prepare to compromise if I had to. Is it  
8 a material issue or an immaterial issue?

9           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
10 work impact the State and which of these impacts will  
11 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
12 the Commission's work to harm the State and, if so, in  
13 what ways?

14           MS. WHITE: The objective of Prop. 11 was to  
15 make the districts representative of all the people of  
16 California, and the impact on the State will be the  
17 communities will not be divided, the politicians will be  
18 turned in to the needs of the voter, and the politicians  
19 will be accountable to the community that they represent.  
20 And they'll have to work together to solve the problems  
21 that we have going on right now.

22           And I think working together, solving problems,  
23 will improve the most.

24           The harm is that -- I don't know what harm could  
25 come of it. The only harm would be if we don't do it

1 properly and people don't feel that they're represented  
2 properly.

3           The only other thing is the fact that we're not  
4 doing the Congressional districts and Prop. 20 may change  
5 that. But until that, I mean we still have where the  
6 Legislators will be making a lot of their own decisions.

7           And by the fact that we're not doing Congress,  
8 double duty, and we're paying -- we're going to have to  
9 pay two Commissions to do the work, or we're going to have  
10 to pay a lot of money again, so that would be the harm.

11           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation  
12 where you've had to work as a part of a group to achieve a  
13 common goal? Tell us about the goal, describe your role  
14 within the group and tell us how the group worked or did  
15 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal?

16           If you are selected to serve on the Citizens  
17 Redistricting Commission, tell us what you would do to  
18 foster collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure  
19 the Commission meets its legal deadlines?

20           MS. WHITE: Okay. That one, the goal was every  
21 goal, conduct the audit following the audit plan that we  
22 had developed. And my role, I was the supervisor and I  
23 had to review and insure that the needs of the team and  
24 the taxpayer were being met.

25           And how we worked collaboratively was



1 communication, you had to have communication.

2           And what I would do -- I didn't have one audit,  
3 I would have four or five, maybe six audits going on all  
4 at the same time, and I would go and I would visit the  
5 different audit sites frequently. And I would go ahead  
6 and while I would be there I would review their work and  
7 then I'd talk to the team. I had different team, we might  
8 have a computer audit specialist, we'd have an engineer,  
9 we'd have an employment tax, whatever it took. We're  
10 talking about a large audit that took two years, on  
11 occasion, to complete.

12           And so, you'd be meeting with the team, you'd be  
13 finding out what did they need? Are anything giving them  
14 a problem? Is the taxpayer giving them the information  
15 that they need? Are they having a delay? Are they having  
16 any kind of a problem with even our audit team, anything  
17 that would delay them being able to complete the job?

18           So, you would meet with them. And then the  
19 other thing that I did, I would meet with the taxpayer  
20 frequently. I would come to him and I would say -- or him  
21 or her, and I'd say I'm here, here's my phone number, if  
22 you have any problem let me know, keep in contact with me.

23           And then another thing that we did, the team  
24 would meet with the taxpayer, the team and the managers  
25 would meet with the taxpayer so that we could make sure

1 that we were all on the same page.

2 On working with the other Commissioners, I would  
3 make sure that all the Commissioners understand what our  
4 goal -- we don't have that much time, we have to finish it  
5 by, what, September the 11<sup>th</sup>, I think is that the one date,  
6 or October? Very -- depending on that Prop. 20 or  
7 whatever.

8 We have to share the responsibility and we have  
9 to set our deadlines and make sure that we meet them. And  
10 we would have to meet before the deadline to find out is  
11 there anything delaying that problem, anything delaying  
12 the fact that we can't meet that deadline. And that's  
13 what I would do.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
15 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
16 from all over California, who come from very different  
17 backgrounds and very different perspectives.

18 If you were selected to serve on the Commission,  
19 tell us about the specific skills you possess that will  
20 make you effective in interacting with the public?

21 MS. WHITE: Well, I tell you, I didn't want to  
22 toot my own horn so, there again I went to the people that  
23 know me, the people that I worked with, and I asked them  
24 what -- what did you -- when you worked for me or when I  
25 was with you, working on a program, what did you find?

1           And they said, well, first of all that I was a  
2   good listener. The other thing, I remain calm, I don't  
3   get all excited and say, oh, we can't have that or we  
4   can't do that. I have empathy with people.

5           They said I'm trustworthy and I have integrity.  
6   I'm a hard worker and I motivate people. And I'm a quick  
7   learner. But I added that.

8           (Laughter.)

9           MS. WHITE: They didn't tell me that.

10          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi?

11          CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you very much. Good  
12   afternoon, Ms. White.

13          Go ahead and please complete your response to  
14   question number one, I believe you stated that you have a  
15   detailed breakdown of the stages, I would like to hear  
16   that?

17          MS. WHITE: Okay. I had three phases. Okay,  
18   January through March we have 90 days. Okay, we'd be  
19   meeting with the other Commissioners, we would have to  
20   learn the redistricting process, review the prior data  
21   from the other, and the maps. We'd have to set up  
22   facilities, determine and hire the needed specialists.  
23   Conduct -- contact community outreach partners, find out  
24   who -- you know, who would be interested in attending a  
25   meeting and we would schedule tentative meetings with

1 outreach partners. And I figure we have 90 days to do  
2 that.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: So, this was January through  
4 March?

5 MS. WHITE: Pardon?

6 CHAIR AHMADI: January through March, you said?

7 MS. WHITE: January through March, okay. And  
8 then when we get the data, okay, I would figure April to  
9 June 15<sup>th</sup> we have 75 days, we'd be reviewing the data, we'd  
10 be attending meetings with community groups and we would  
11 prepare the tentative maps. They wouldn't be final, they  
12 would just be tentative.

13 Oh, I forgot to tell you about the skills needed  
14 for the part one.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Please?

16 (Laughter.)

17 MS. WHITE: Okay, we have planning and  
18 organizational.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: And you can slow down a little  
20 bit.

21 MS. WHITE: Okay.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: I'm taking some notes to make  
23 sure I understand it correctly.

24 MS. WHITE: Okay. Planning and organizational,  
25 analytical, communication, time management, interpersonal

1 and team building, that comes into phase one.

2 And phase two, 75 days reviewing the data.

3 Okay, we review the data, attend the meetings, and prepare  
4 tentative maps.

5 Okay, there you have to have appreciation of  
6 diversity, communication skills, analytical, legal and  
7 technical, and interpersonal.

8 And phase three, I figure we have from June 15<sup>th</sup>  
9 to September 15<sup>th</sup> would be 90 days. We would have to  
10 prepare our final map and we'd have to submit it for  
11 approval, and we'd have to have time to have it, whether  
12 approved or not.

13 And we'd have to have report writing,  
14 analytical, and communication.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

16 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: So, should you be selected as one  
18 of the eight Commissioners, which will happen towards the  
19 end of November of this year, how would you spend your  
20 time during December?

21 MS. WHITE: Well, you know what, I have to tell  
22 you, I am probably the most apolitical individual you are  
23 going to meet. I am not really that much involved in  
24 politics at all. I would be -- I would be studying,  
25 learning the things that I feel that I need to -- I'm very

1 curious as to how they set the districts before and I'm  
2 very curious as to what the maps look like. I've never --  
3 I don't know how they've broken them down, I have not done  
4 that.

5 And that's what I would be doing and trying to  
6 get everything ready ahead of time.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: What would you try to learn from  
8 prior data, I believe you mentioned --

9 MS. WHITE: Okay, the prior --

10 CHAIR AHMADI: -- in the stage one you will be  
11 gather prior data. Could you elaborate on that, please,  
12 what kind of data and you can be specific?

13 MS. WHITE: Well, I would -- I'm very curious as  
14 to how -- with 80 different districts, I don't think a lot  
15 of them or all of them are going to change. I want to  
16 know what they're comprised of, how did they do that? I  
17 know they do that by population, I know, but then I heard  
18 that they're doing it by people -- the problem, the reason  
19 we're here is because the Legislators would go ahead and  
20 carve out their own little area.

21 Well, I want to find out about that, I want to  
22 find out what happened there. I want to know what the map  
23 looked like, I really -- you have it on the internet, but  
24 it's not broken down that well, I want to look at that a  
25 little bit better and find out what they did and how they

1 did it.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: But by how you mean the reasons  
3 behind --

4 MS. WHITE: Yeah. Yeah.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: -- why the lines were drawn the  
6 way they appear today?

7 MS. WHITE: I mean, I know it's probably  
8 Democratic or Republican, or whatever, but that's not  
9 enough. You have to actually find out about the  
10 community, you have to find out what -- you know, if  
11 you -- you know, I flew up here today and I flew up I  
12 think probably up Route 99, I'm not even sure. And you  
13 look at the farming, and you look at all that farming,  
14 which I hadn't really -- you know, I grew up in  
15 California, but you haven't paid that much attention to  
16 it.

17 And, I mean, what do they think, what do they  
18 need, other than water, which we have a problem in  
19 California. You know, what are the different -- look at  
20 the different urban areas and look at the problems that  
21 they have.

22 I mean, you know and we have -- we have such a  
23 problem in California, that's why I even got involved. We  
24 have a problem in California, we don't have enough money,  
25 we don't have enough -- we don't have enough anything, and

1 we have to get people involved. We have to get people to  
2 get in there and identify and -- and we can't do it just  
3 by -- we have to have people involved, we have to have  
4 community people involved.

5 And there again, I'd probably want the  
6 community. I don't know -- I don't know the different  
7 community outreach programs that we have, but we have to  
8 find them, we have to identify them and notify them.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so that's what you mean by  
10 looking at the prior data, to get input from the public --

11 MS. WHITE: Yeah, you have to. You have to.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: -- and to see to what extent they  
13 justified the old maps, did I hear you correctly?

14 MS. WHITE: I mean, I know the old maps won't  
15 have that much impact -- well, the old map may have impact  
16 because not all the areas will change. I can't imagine  
17 we're going to change all 80 districts, but I think there  
18 will be quite a few of them that will and we have to know.  
19 I just want to know how they did it.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

21 MS. WHITE: I haven't really looked at that.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure. You also  
23 mentioned -- thank you.

24 I think I'm clear on your response on that and  
25 there's value looking at, you know, the historic data or



1 the community input, definitely.

2 MS. WHITE: Sure. Yeah.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: You also mentioned that you will  
4 be hiring specialists.

5 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: What type of services do you  
7 think the Commission will need from experts?

8 MS. WHITE: Well, we're going to need people  
9 that -- first of all, we're going to be needing people  
10 that will be inputting the data into the computer. We're  
11 going to be needing people that -- I can see we're going  
12 to have a few attorneys that are going to have to be  
13 there.

14 We're going to need people that are -- other  
15 than that, I can't think other than computer input people  
16 and maybe a few attorneys.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. And in your description of  
18 stage two -- well, let me back up a step.

19 MS. WHITE: Well, you know what, but then the  
20 other thing, we're going to need our staff, too. We're  
21 going to need secretaries, we're going to need people --  
22 if we're going to be scheduling meetings, we're going to  
23 have to have people that are going to be -- I wasn't  
24 thinking of that, I was thinking the technical part. No,  
25 but we're going to be needing people that are going to be

1 doing the clerical, the people that are going to be  
2 contacting -- we're going to need people that will be  
3 writing the letters, contacting the public and making them  
4 aware. Contacting, probably, newspaper people, you know,  
5 there's a lot of -- so, I would think the administrative.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Okay, thank you.

7 To what extent, if any, the census data will  
8 have an impact on your decisions and at what point would  
9 you look into the census data. I guess I missed that part  
10 of your description. I believe it was in stage two, you  
11 said, from March through June 15, you said?

12 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum, yeah. Well, you have to  
13 know how the -- you know, California has changed in the  
14 last ten years and people have -- excuse me -- people have  
15 left. I'm sure it's not like it was in 2000, and we have  
16 to find out what is the population and what are the  
17 different areas that need to be addressed, and what are  
18 the different communities that have sprung up?

19 Like in San Diego, we have quite a Vietnamese  
20 community and that has -- it used to be one area. Well,  
21 then now it's more than one area. And we have to look at  
22 that and find out.

23 And I'm not sure -- you know what, other than  
24 the data -- I don't know what they told me on our data was  
25 how long have you lived, who lives there, how many people

1 live in your home, and what nationality are you and -- you  
2 know, I got the short form, I didn't get much. So, I  
3 don't know what it will have on there.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

5 I had a few questions on the material in your  
6 application.

7 MS. WHITE: Okay.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: And I have some follow-up  
9 questions, but I think I can get to them if I have time.

10 MS. WHITE: Okay.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: So, let me just get through some  
12 of these questions that I was planning to ask.

13 It appears that you have always lived, gone to  
14 school and worked in Southern California?

15 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: San Diego, I believe.

17 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Can you tell us of any  
19 experiences you have had, personally, in other parts of  
20 the State?

21 MS. WHITE: Well, my husband had a job -- I've  
22 never worked -- oh, well, actually, when I worked for the  
23 Internal Revenue I had a detail in San Francisco for two  
24 months. And that required that I travel to different  
25 parts of California.

1           I was a regional analyst and I'd have to go to  
2 different offices and review their -- how they were doing  
3 things in different offices.

4           CHAIR AHMADI: What parts of the State?

5           MS. WHITE: Let's see, I had to go to Fresno. I  
6 had to go to -- the memory thing -- let's see, I had to go  
7 to Riverside. I had to go, of course, to L.A. And I had  
8 to go to San Francisco. I was there. And I had to go --  
9 I think that was probably it. I was only there for two  
10 months.

11          CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. The reason I asked  
12 that is to kind of like -- my next follow-up question that  
13 I was planning to ask is to -- if you can please share  
14 with us your understanding of the differences or  
15 similarities between Northern California and Southern  
16 California, what are some of the issues that brings people  
17 together, and what are some of the differences, but are  
18 still valuable to be considered as part of the work of the  
19 Commission?

20          MS. WHITE: Well, California is so big and, I  
21 mean, if you look at Northern California and it's -- you  
22 know, you look at the beauty of Northern California and  
23 then, of course, they have all the water.

24          And then you look at Southern California and we  
25 don't have the water that we need.

1           And you look at the farming in the center part  
2 of California.

3           And everybody has a need different. I mean,  
4 everybody wants to be fairly represented, but the  
5 different needs of the different areas would be  
6 controlling. I mean, whoever would be representing them  
7 has to look for what they want.

8           CHAIR AHMADI: Oh, okay. Okay.

9           So, for example, if you look at the inland, like  
10 the Central Valley, as you mentioned, you know, that the  
11 needs might be for water, I believe you said at that --

12          MS. WHITE: Well, I don't know if, that's right,  
13 that's right. No, we're the ones that need water in  
14 Southern California, we don't have no water. We're on a  
15 time restriction for watering our lawn, you know, we don't  
16 have water.

17          CHAIR AHMADI: Do you think the Commission, if  
18 successful, will resolve that problem?

19          MS. WHITE: Well, the Commission -- no, they  
20 won't, but the Legislators will. Hopefully, they'll get  
21 in there and they'll have to work together to find out  
22 what can we do? What can we do?

23          You know, we're there to make sure that we have  
24 a representative government and that different people are  
25 taken care of.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

2 Another question I had based on the material in  
3 your application, you're -- or you have been the Chair of  
4 Hispanic Internal Revenue Employees?

5 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Developed a good upward mobility  
7 program for the employees.

8 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: And you're also interested to  
10 non-Hispanic employees.

11 Could you tell us a little more detail about  
12 that? What were the makeup of the employees, and what was  
13 the goals, and how did you get involved, and what was --  
14 was it successful?

15 MS. WHITE: Very, very. Hispanic Internal  
16 Revenue -- well, as it is, Internal Revenue employees that  
17 work for the Internal Revenue.

18 What happened, it originated in L.A. and they  
19 did not have many Hispanic employees in management and  
20 they wanted to try to get the Hispanic employees, you  
21 know, upward mobility for them.

22 So, they got together -- we would get together  
23 on the weekend and what could we do? What could we do?

24 Well, we had to have a training program, we had  
25 to make sure that we would develop our employees and give

1    them assignments where they could be competitive.

2                   CHAIR AHMADI:   By -- I'm sorry, by we, you mean  
3    the management or the Hispanic employees?

4                   MS. WHITE:   We -- we, as employees, would talk  
5    to our managers.

6                   CHAIR AHMADI:   Okay.

7                   MS. WHITE:   And say we need to get our -- you  
8    know, to get employees a detail, or give them an  
9    opportunity to show what they can do, and we would do  
10   that.

11                   Well, it worked very, very well.   I was the  
12   first Hispanic female manager in the L.A. District.   You  
13   know, they picked me in 1983.

14                   CHAIR AHMADI:   Congratulations.

15                   MS. WHITE:   1983.   That's not really -- I mean,  
16   you know.

17                   But anyway --

18                   MS. HAMEL:   Five minutes.

19                   MS. WHITE:   Okay.   So, we developed a program  
20   and we would talk to -- but then it worked so well that  
21   other employees that were non-Hispanic, would say can we  
22   join your program, can we work with you?

23                   And we said, of course, come.   You know, the  
24   better our employees, any employee is, the better our  
25   organization would be.   That's what we did.

1                   CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. I wish I had more  
2 time but let me just get -- hopefully, get to my next  
3 question.

4                   In your application you also mentioned that  
5 you're aware of issues facing Legislators and you give  
6 some examples about environmental, social and labor  
7 issues. Could you elaborate on that, please?

8                   MS. WHITE: Well, you know, we have to -- we  
9 have to make sure that the different people -- we have a  
10 problem with labor. The unions, I think we have a  
11 terrible pension problem in California. I don't know how,  
12 but they have to take care of that problem.

13                   We have that problem in San Diego and I think we  
14 have it in the -- within the State.

15                   We have an education problem, we have to get in  
16 there and work, and make sure that the people are being  
17 educated.

18                   I actually do also tutor, and I work with  
19 children and tutor them in -- only third grade. I take a  
20 child a year, I take a Hispanic child and I tutor that one  
21 for the year, to make sure that they can read.

22                   Only, I heard a thing and it said you enter the  
23 third grade learning to read and you leave the third grade  
24 reading to learn. And I said I want to work with a third  
25 grader.



1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much.

2 I don't know -- we have three minutes, so let me  
3 try this.

4 MS. WHITE: Oh, okay.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: In response to standard question  
6 number three, you mentioned that the harm would be that  
7 not -- that the people will not have representation as  
8 they deserve.

9 What would you do, should you be selected as a  
10 Commissioner, what would you do to insure that people will  
11 have representation?

12 MS. WHITE: Well, I think we have to get people  
13 involved. That's why I talk about going out to the  
14 community and finding the different people.

15 I think there are a lot of people in California  
16 that don't vote, that are eligible to vote but they don't  
17 vote, and we need to reach them.

18 I don't know how, but I know that there are -- I  
19 know there are people, I know there are programs that  
20 address different minorities and we have to get those  
21 people to come out.

22 And maybe I can't do it, but if I go to a group  
23 and say we want to do that, they could hold their meeting.  
24 And if we would have to be there, then we could get them  
25 involved, and get people to know that they have to vote to

1 make a change. There's a lot of people that don't vote in  
2 California that are eligible, and we have to get them.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

4 MS. WHITE: That's the only thing I can thing is  
5 talk -- I don't know about community outreach, I have to  
6 find out.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Do you have any groups or  
8 organizations in mind?

9 MS. WHITE: As of now, no. I probably would  
10 look at that during my pre --

11 CHAIR AHMADI: During December?

12 MS. WHITE: Yeah.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you very much, no more  
14 questions at this point.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. I always forget  
17 to turn it on.

18 Hello, Ms. White?

19 MS. WHITE: May I have a drink of water?

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes, go ahead.

21 To kind of follow up on Mr. Ahmadi's question,  
22 when you go out to these communities of interest there's  
23 going to be all various types of individuals, people that  
24 vote, people that don't vote, people that cannot vote.  
25 Would you listen to them all equally and would you weight

1 all their opinions the same?

2 MS. WHITE: I would. I would, because I feel  
3 that they have -- they have a -- they have an interest in  
4 being there or they wouldn't be at the meeting. They have  
5 something that they want to volunteer. Not that you could  
6 address every problem that they had or that you could do  
7 anything about it, but of course I would. I would have  
8 to.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And could you elaborate  
10 more on why you would want to listen to these various  
11 groups?

12 MS. WHITE: Why would -- are you talking about  
13 the different -- because they live there and they know  
14 what's going on there. How could I come into an area that  
15 I've never been before and say you're not important? I  
16 mean, they know what's going on in their community and  
17 you'd have to -- that's how you get information, by  
18 listening to what people tell you.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And so, it wouldn't matter  
20 if the person was unable to vote, doesn't vote, or votes  
21 all the time?

22 MS. WHITE: That's right. Because I'll tell  
23 you, even as a revenue agent, I got a lot of information  
24 from people that were not involved, and you learn, you  
25 learn that everybody has something to offer. They always

1 do.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. As you were talking  
3 about, you had this higher program that you worked with,  
4 but you were also an EEO, that you helped out with the EEO  
5 program and the IRS College recruitment coordinator?

6 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What steps did you take to  
8 encourage diversity in the IRS recruiting?

9 MS. WHITE: I actually -- I went -- well, I'm an  
10 accountant, I would go to the accounting classes and I  
11 would talk to the accounting students. And there again I  
12 didn't just for the Hispanic, or the black, or the Asian,  
13 or whatever, I went to everybody. And we would hold  
14 programs in the evening and I would talk to the people  
15 that I worked with and I'd say could you come in the  
16 evening and meet with these students from San Diego State?  
17 We want to -- we would have different people. We had  
18 people from exam, we had people from collection, we had  
19 people from different areas, and we even had attorneys.  
20 And they would come and they would talk about their job  
21 within the Internal Revenue.

22 And then the different people, the different  
23 students could come in and talk to them later, and find  
24 out about the job, and that was what we did. And that  
25 worked very, very well. It worked very well and we were

1 able to get a lot of minority students that way.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And did you go to other  
3 colleges, than just San Diego State University?

4 MS. WHITE: That was the only one. See, I  
5 graduated from there and I knew the professors and so they  
6 would -- I was a good student, they would allow me to come  
7 into their room and talk to them. I did not have -- I  
8 wasn't familiar with the other.

9 We only have University of San Diego, and they  
10 didn't really have an accounting thing there at the time.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. As you told us, as a  
12 revenue agent you audited tax returns of many types and  
13 met with many different audited parties. Would you need  
14 to change your approach, as a member of the Commission,  
15 meeting with interested parties? Why or why not?

16 MS. WHITE: Would I have to change my approach?

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes. Would you change your  
18 approach?

19 MS. WHITE: Probably not, no. Because the way  
20 my approach worked, I mean, I -- I don't really know what  
21 you mean by changing my approach about it.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When you go into an  
23 auditee, there's a particular objective that you have in  
24 mind. There's a different objective that you have for  
25 when you go to the public meetings. Would the approach be

1 the same if you go -- that you used with the auditees, as  
2 you would for talking and interacting with the  
3 communities?

4 MS. WHITE: Well, you know, until I actually  
5 went to one and found out how it worked I wouldn't -- if  
6 it didn't -- if I found that if I went to a meeting and it  
7 didn't work, I would have to change. I'd say what  
8 happened, how come we're not getting anywhere? We didn't  
9 get what we wanted, what do we have to do to change and  
10 then I would change. If it worked, I wouldn't change it.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. In your application  
12 you stated that within the IRS you held many positions  
13 applicable for Commission duties. Could you elaborate on  
14 that statement?

15 MS. WHITE: Well, I said you should be -- have  
16 organizational skills. I was a manager. As a revenue  
17 agent I had to have time management. You had to be  
18 organized, you had to be analytical, you had to review the  
19 data.

20 I was a fraud agent, I learned how to  
21 investigate -- I was an EEO investigator. I had to learn  
22 how to draw people out, get information from them. Even  
23 people that didn't want to give me the information, you  
24 had to talk to them.

25 And as a manager you had -- in a large case you

1 had to work as a team. You had to get the people to feel  
2 that they were part of the team and what they were doing  
3 was important. You had to make them know that you were  
4 depending on them. And anything that came up, you would  
5 do whatever you could to help them.

6 But they had to do their job, too.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: As you know, you'll be  
8 hiring, like you were stating, many various individuals.  
9 How do you think your -- you know, if they're located up  
10 in Sacramento and you're located in San Diego, how would  
11 you insure that the work was still being completed?

12 MS. WHITE: Well, I would imagine that not all  
13 the Commissioners are going to be in San Diego. And if we  
14 had -- we would -- you have ways of reviewing, especially  
15 now with teleconferencing, there's so many things that you  
16 can do with the computer that you couldn't do before. And  
17 I would imagine we'd probably be doing that, too, making  
18 sure that, like anything else, you review the work, review  
19 the timeline, review the -- you know, find out what's  
20 happening.

21 And I don't know if there will be a lot of  
22 traveling. I don't know how they're going to break down  
23 the job of the Commissioners. We have such a large State,  
24 I don't know what they're going to do. I think that would  
25 be one of the areas that we'd be talking about when we get

1 together.

2 I can't imagine 14 Commissioners traveling all  
3 over the State. I mean, you can't -- I don't think we can  
4 afford that so we'd have to break it down.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. As you were talking  
6 about the hire program that you were a part of in the IRS,  
7 and that it was successful, do you happen to know from  
8 that program how many individuals of minorities were  
9 promoted?

10 MS. WHITE: Quite a few. Quite a few. We had  
11 the -- the one individual that signed my -- that gave the  
12 letter of recommendation was one. Carmen -- the other  
13 one, Carmen Hardy.

14 Okay, Paul Cordova is a Hispanic, Carmen Hardy  
15 was black. We had -- gosh, we had -- we had many.

16 Because we would develop a plan for them. We  
17 would develop a plan, an upward mobility plan and then we  
18 would make sure that they would go to their manager and  
19 have the manager work with them on that area. And if they  
20 needed training, make sure that they got the training.  
21 So, there were quite a few.

22 And it began in L.A., went to San Diego, and  
23 then one of the people ended up in Florida, he started it  
24 in Florida. And then he transferred to Texas, he started  
25 it there. And wherever they would go, they would continue



1 to build a chapter, and that's how we got to be national.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my  
3 last question.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano?

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

6 MS. WHITE: Good afternoon.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are these cupcakes from  
8 you?

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's from Mr. Wright.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, okay. I'm sorry, I  
11 didn't know who they were from.

12 (Laughter.)

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thanks, Jim.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Who is no longer an  
15 applicant and, therefore, there is nothing improper about  
16 receiving the cupcake.

17 (Laughter.)

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me why it was  
19 so important that the IRS recruit minorities at this time,  
20 in the seventies?

21 MS. WHITE: Because you had to represent -- you  
22 wanted representation within the Internal Revenue.

23 I was very, very fortunate, I had two -- I had  
24 my one manager -- when I got into management, my one  
25 manager was Chinese, and he told me, he said, you know,

1 when I graduated from college, and he was a straight A, he  
2 said, they wouldn't hire -- a Big 8, at that time there  
3 was a Big 8. He said, they wouldn't hire a Chinese.

4 Companies, the CPAs did not want Chinese people  
5 looking at their records.

6 I was a very, very good accounting major, but  
7 then I was older, I didn't graduate until I was 31. But  
8 they didn't want a Hispanic woman, either. You know, and  
9 so it had to be within the fact that we had to do it, we  
10 had to do it, and we did it. And it was very, very  
11 important because we were talented, we were capable, and  
12 we had to show what we could do, and so we did. We did.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Would you say that the IRS  
14 tax auditors mostly were Caucasian at that time?

15 MS. WHITE: Yeah, at that time.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: At the time. Now, when you  
17 hired these minorities or when the government, the IRS  
18 hired these minorities, how did the clients respond to  
19 this, that you were auditing? Or the taxpayers, not  
20 clients?

21 MS. WHITE: Well, you know, it's really funny.  
22 When I went -- at one time I went out on an audit and the  
23 man called up my boss and he said you can't have -- you  
24 can't -- there's a problem here. And my boss said what's  
25 the problem? There's a woman here and she says she's a

1 revenue agent. He said, I'm not having a woman come in  
2 and look at my books. I mean, now that was '73.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Seventy-three. And over  
4 the years that you were there how have you seen it  
5 changed?

6 MS. WHITE: Dramatically, dramatically. And  
7 people are now -- we're getting more where it should be,  
8 where people are being evaluated on the work that they do  
9 and on their ability. Because we were capable, we are  
10 capable and we could do it, and we did it.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And as you went out to  
12 these -- as you audited the -- was there a specific  
13 companies that you audited or --

14 MS. WHITE: Well, it would depend. I mean, as a  
15 revenue agent I audited individuals, small businesses and  
16 corporations.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

18 MS. WHITE: As a manager, when I finished, we  
19 were what we called the team audit, but they're called  
20 multi-national, and it would take two to three years to  
21 audit a company.

22 And we would be there, and we would come in and  
23 we'd say we're going to be here -- a lot of times it was a  
24 continuation, a different team. One team would leave and  
25 another team would come in. Other times we were brand-new

1 and we've to come in, and we're telling them you have to  
2 give me an office for two to three years.

3 At that time sometimes we'd even say you have to  
4 give me a computer, you have to give me a copy machine,  
5 you have to give me -- you know, we'd say you're very,  
6 very lucky, you're very successful and now here we are.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, two to three years you  
8 spent on an audit, the feds would spend two to three years  
9 on a single audit?

10 MS. WHITE: Yeah. They're very complicated  
11 because you might have international issues, you could  
12 have -- first of all, you'd have your computer audit  
13 specialist come in and he would do a review of the  
14 records.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

16 MS. WHITE: And the you would have your agent.  
17 And then you'd have your engineers would come in if they  
18 had an issue. We had very different backgrounds in the  
19 Internal Revenue.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How does this experience  
21 help you understand the local preferences and needs of the  
22 people of California?

23 MS. WHITE: Well, you know what, I have found  
24 that although people are different, people are -- we're  
25 all the same. And we all have what we want, we all have

1 our wants, we have the things that we like, but everybody  
2 wants to be recognized. Everybody wants to feel that what  
3 they are doing is important. And I think that we can -- I  
4 think that we can do that by making sure if we do have --  
5 if we do reach the communities that we need to, in getting  
6 them involved -- I don't know, maybe we can't, maybe there  
7 will be communities that won't get involved, I don't know.  
8 I don't know. But we have to try, we have to try.

9 And maybe we won't be lucky right away, but I  
10 think in time you will. I mean, if you don't give up --  
11 you don't give up, you say, well, it didn't work, we can't  
12 do it.

13 You say what didn't work, what can we do to make  
14 sure that we try again?

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned earlier that  
16 there's a pension problem in California.

17 MS. WHITE: Pardon?

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: There's a pension problem  
19 in California, as well as in San Diego.

20 So, can you explain to me why and how the  
21 pension programs are messed up to you?

22 MS. WHITE: Why?

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why and how?

24 MS. WHITE: I can tell you why in San Diego,  
25 because they allowed -- they allowed these programs to get

1 to -- they had what they called a "drop program," where  
2 people could come in and buy time that they didn't work.  
3 And they allowed it at the time when the -- they bought  
4 years of service.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Service credit?

6 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum. And then, I mean, times  
7 were good and everything was going well. But when times  
8 went bad, they didn't have the money. And then in San  
9 Diego they went through and they said, well, we don't have  
10 enough money o pay, but we're going to -- I forget what  
11 they did, they did something so they wouldn't have to pay  
12 that amount for that year, that they needed to put into  
13 the fund.

14 And it just kept growing, and growing and  
15 growing. They're talking about -- I'm sure that we're not  
16 the only city that's going to have that problem. And I  
17 think -- they keep talking about filing bankruptcy, you  
18 know, are we going to -- not San Diego, but a lot of them.  
19 Are we going to have to do that, to do away with the  
20 contracts that we have with these people?

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You're talking about a lot  
22 of the -- you mean a lot of the counties, other counties?

23 MS. WHITE: Yes.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In the surrounding area of  
25 San Diego?

1 MS. WHITE: No, I think -- no, it's mainly San  
2 Diego City. But I'm talking about what you hear about in  
3 L.A., you hear about that in different areas of the State.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And how do you propose that  
5 the State's redistricting effort would help bring those  
6 concerns to light and maybe help address those issues and  
7 get them moving in the right direction?

8 MS. WHITE: You know what, I don't -- I really  
9 don't know. I wish I could -- I wish I could say, oh,  
10 here's what we'd have to do. I don't know, because I  
11 don't know what would work.

12 You get people -- how do you tell people that  
13 have a pension coming in that you can't have it anymore?  
14 I don't know about you, but you work and you depend on  
15 that money, and then you tell them you can't have it? I  
16 don't know what we're going to do.

17 Are we only going to do it with the new people?  
18 I know right now they're trying to do it only with the new  
19 hires. But, you know, we still have that great big budget  
20 problem with the people that worked before. I don't know.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The budget problem in San  
22 Diego?

23 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum, uh-hum.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What was the problem?

25 MS. WHITE: Well, that's it, we don't have

1 enough money to cover all the money that we owe.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Their debt  
3 obligations?

4 MS. WHITE: And even in the State, they're  
5 talking today about filing -- paying with IOUs, what are  
6 we going to do?

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. You mentioned  
8 earlier that you don't think that a lot will change with  
9 the maps and how they're drawn?

10 MS. WHITE: No, I said I don't think they will  
11 all change. I think there may be areas that have not  
12 changed that much, you know.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Areas that haven't changed?

14 MS. WHITE: There are some areas that have not  
15 changed that much.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you talk about that a  
17 little bit?

18 MS. WHITE: Well, I don't -- I just can't  
19 imagine that 80 districts are all going to be different.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

21 MS. WHITE: That, you know, until we look at the  
22 map and find out how we do it, you know, but I can't  
23 imagine that they would all be --

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you think you can kind  
25 of shed some light on what would contribute to the factors



1 that would have a district remain the same and those that  
2 may attribute to a change in the lines?

3 MS. WHITE: Well, like I think your main areas  
4 are going to be in the San Francisco area, your L.A. area.  
5 I can't see like Imperial County changing too much.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why?

7 MS. WHITE: You know, that area down there in  
8 the desert, where the population hasn't really shifted  
9 that much. I can't see the rural area, where you have a  
10 lot of farmland, it can't have changed that much. I mean,  
11 there has to be areas that aren't -- that, you know, if  
12 you own a large farm, I mean you own it and you're not --  
13 unless you gave it up or whatever, and you broke it up and  
14 it became residential.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me what does  
16 appreciation for California's diversity mean to you?

17 MS. WHITE: It means that all people are equal.  
18 It means that it doesn't matter -- I have found that when  
19 I have worked with people, I feel the major difference  
20 between people is education. I feel very strongly about  
21 education. That's why I like to work and make sure that  
22 the people are educated.

23 My neighborhood is no different. I'm there. We  
24 have Asian people in the neighborhood, but we're all  
25 within the same economic area. We all have -- you know,

1 our home -- I have one of those homes like they talk  
2 about, you know, if you see one, you've seen them all.  
3 It's identical, it's just a --

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Is it a tract home?

5 MS. WHITE: A tract home. A tract home and, you  
6 know, they have three different models. Oh, yeah, I know  
7 where that one is and that one, and that one, and I have  
8 the third one. You know, and we're not different.

9 And, but we all have the same type of --  
10 probably the same type of income or we have -- I don't  
11 know, but my neighborhood, I live in a very unusual  
12 neighborhood and it -- the income-wise, probably not,  
13 because the people moved into that home when they were  
14 brand-new. 1957 they were built. And there's only been  
15 one divorce and the majority of people are now dying.  
16 They're not -- they haven't moved, they've lived that from  
17 that time. And it's just a very -- it's just a little  
18 cul-de-sac in Claremont and very, very non-changeable.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Claremont. In what way is  
20 it unusual, this neighborhood?

21 MS. WHITE: The fact that there's no divorces.

22 (Laughter.)

23 MS. WHITE: The fact that the children were born  
24 there and they all grew up there.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh.

1 MS. WHITE: And the fact that now some of them,  
2 when the parents have died, the children have moved back  
3 in.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh.

5 MS. WHITE: It's just a very, very, very good  
6 neighborhood to grow up in. I loved the fact that my  
7 children grew up there. And when I die, one of my  
8 children will get it.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are you aware of any shared  
10 interests you have in your neighborhood, your community?

11 MS. WHITE: What do you mean shared?

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Shared, common?

13 MS. WHITE: Oh, of course. Of course. We have  
14 the -- you know, we have -- we used to have neighborhood  
15 get-togethers, but we haven't had that for a while. But  
16 they work together. One little thing, or they had a  
17 problem, even with the stop sign at the corner, but they  
18 all got together and made sure that they were able to get  
19 that going, and put a stop sign so that we didn't have to  
20 worry about the kids. We had other, little, young kids  
21 coming around. They had a baseball park right across and  
22 kids would -- when they would come to that park and they'd  
23 walk across -- there was nothing to keep the other cars  
24 from coming and we've got that taken care of.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I'm going to circle back to

1 diversity again. You mentioned what appreciation for  
2 California's diversity means to you, and I was curious,  
3 why is appreciation for California's diversity so  
4 important to redrawing the lines?

5 MS. WHITE: Well, I think, like I said, because  
6 everybody has to feel that they're counted, everybody has  
7 to feel that they're a part of the solution to our  
8 problem.

9 And different people have -- they all have a  
10 different -- they have different needs, but we have to  
11 address them all and we have to make sure that they're  
12 taken care of.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

14 To what clubs and/or organizations do you belong  
15 to, participate in, or have made any donation to,  
16 including any social, community, religious, political,  
17 professional organizations or clubs of any kind?

18 MS. WHITE: Well, I belong to the Assistance  
19 League of Greater San Diego and I'm the treasurer.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I'm sorry, the Assistance  
21 what?

22 MS. WHITE: League of Greater San Diego.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And what do they do?

24 MS. WHITE: We're a nonprofit corporation,  
25 501(c)(3), and we run a thrift shop. And with the money

1 that we get from the thrift shop we buy clothing for any  
2 needy student, grades one through six, in San Diego  
3 County.

4 Last year I think we clothed 2,000 children. We  
5 have -- and then I belong to -- I belong to a yacht club.  
6 Actually, I belong to two yacht clubs. My husband's into  
7 boating and we have two, we have a sailboat and a power  
8 boat.

9 I belong to HIRE. I belong to the IRS CPA  
10 Society. I belong to the choir at the church. And like I  
11 said, I'm not political, so I don't belong to any  
12 political group, other than registered to vote.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Has the yacht club that you  
14 participate in, or your husband participates in, do they  
15 make any donation or take a stance?

16 MS. WHITE: Oh, yes, we do.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In regards to any political  
18 cause?

19 MS. WHITE: Oh, no, no, no, no.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Or a specific candidate in  
21 office?

22 MS. WHITE: No.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

24 MS. WHITE: I do believe that Brian Bilbray is a  
25 member of Mission Bay Yacht Club. I'm not sure. I may

1 have met him, but even that I'm not sure.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In regards to any of the  
3 clubs you mentioned here today, do they participate or  
4 make any donations in regards to --

5 MS. WHITE: We're not allowed to.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: -- to political causes?

7 MS. WHITE: Our 501(c)(3), we're not allowed to  
8 do that.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

10 MS. WHITE: And as the treasurer, I make sure we  
11 don't do that.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Based on your experiences,  
13 what have you learned about your own political biases and  
14 hot buttons that will assist you on the work of the  
15 Commission?

16 MS. WHITE: Well, I told you, I'm really not  
17 political, there's very little I know about how the  
18 political system works. I don't -- all I know is when  
19 it's time for me to vote, I get the pamphlet that comes in  
20 the mail and I read it.

21 And my husband's a Democrat and he and I talk  
22 about it and we don't agree, but we'll talk about it. And  
23 sometimes he'll agree with me and sometimes I'll agree  
24 with him. But other than that, you know, I -- within the  
25 Internal Revenue, they didn't want you to get involved.

1 You couldn't get involved because you couldn't do anything  
2 that would interfere with conducting an examination. You  
3 know, you just couldn't.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Sure. Sure, I understand.

5 MS. WHITE: You had to be impartial.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Sure. Are you aware of any  
7 local redistricting efforts in San Diego?

8 MS. WHITE: Yes, there are. They just had one a  
9 couple of years ago and they're having another one. They  
10 voted for -- I forget what proposition they voted for and  
11 they're going to have a brand-new District 9, I believe  
12 they call it, that they're going to be making.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What do you know about that  
14 redistricting, the prior one and the one coming up?

15 MS. WHITE: I don't know that much about either  
16 one of them. I just know that they -- I know that when we  
17 voted for this strong mayor, it required another district.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you believe in -- how  
19 many minutes do I have.

20 MS. HAMEL: A minute and a half.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: A minute and a half. Just  
22 to quickly ask you, do you believe you have achieved fair  
23 representation in your community, in your district?

24 MS. WHITE: Do I believe it?

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

1 MS. WHITE: Well, actually, I do. I mean, it's  
2 a Democrat -- that's one thing. But I think the majority  
3 of the people in my area are Democrat.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Thank you.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, are there  
6 follow-up questions?

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I have a couple for you.  
10 In your letter of recommendation from Paul Cordova, he  
11 discusses, he says that "you faced many challenges as a  
12 leader, manager and president of HIRE that tested your  
13 sense of fairness."

14 Tell me about that?

15 MS. WHITE: Well, we had a time when we were --  
16 we broke off from the L.A. area and we had an individual  
17 that didn't -- in upper management, that didn't want us to  
18 do -- to be involved there. And we had to -- we had to  
19 work with him and get him to understand what our goals  
20 were and what we were trying to do, and get him involved  
21 with our program.

22 And what we did, we invited him to come to our  
23 annual dinner and to give a talk, so that he could -- he  
24 could see the people that we had there and what we were  
25 doing, and change it.



1           And it -- it was difficult because it was  
2   difficult for me, in my position, but I had to do what I  
3   had to do.

4           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY:   So, how did that test  
5   your sense of fairness?

6           MS. WHITE:   It made me aware that -- well, I  
7   don't want to -- it just made me aware that not all things  
8   are equal and I had to be the one to make sure that I  
9   could do what I could do to make it equal, and regardless  
10  of the -- of what impact it had on me.

11          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY:   So, you're talking about  
12  that, generally, this is a person who maybe didn't want to  
13  hire minorities and you --

14          MS. WHITE:   Well, it wasn't that they didn't  
15  want to hire minorities, they did not want our time --  
16  they did not want to give us the use of the facilities  
17  after hours, to be there.  And they did not want the time  
18  to be taken.  But we would -- but it changed, it worked.  
19  It did work.

20          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY:   Do you think that women  
21  and people of color still face barriers in the workplace?

22          MS. WHITE:   Oh, of course.

23          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY:   So, HIRE is still a  
24  necessary organization?

25          MS. WHITE:   Well, it's not as important, but

1 it's -- you know what, the other thing, you still have to  
2 have upward mobility. You have to have people that care.  
3 I felt that I was a very caring manager. I would meet  
4 with my employees and I had -- I had to -- every employee  
5 in my group new that I would work with them. What did  
6 they want, what did they need, and what could I get for  
7 them? And it worked. It would work.

8 And I think that carried on, I think they still  
9 do that. I think we have a development program for our  
10 employees. But it wasn't my program, I think it just  
11 evolved.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Can neighborhoods, where  
13 individuals congregate in part based on their sexual  
14 orientation, constitute a community of interest?

15 MS. WHITE: I would think so. We have that in  
16 San Diego, we have Hillcrest. And that's where our thrift  
17 shop is. So that's -- yes, of course.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Why do you think that  
19 certain eligible minority voters are reluctant to  
20 participate in the electoral process?

21 MS. WHITE: I think that they feel it won't make  
22 a difference. I don't believe they -- I don't know if  
23 they've ever tried to get anything through or they have  
24 to -- they have to know that people do care and that they  
25 will -- that they can.

1           If you keep trying to do something and you don't  
2 get anywhere, after a while you say, well, I can't do it  
3 anymore. But you have to make -- you have to reach to  
4 them and try to help them.

5           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That was sort of my next  
6 question, I was going to ask how are you going to reach  
7 that people? I mean, that's kind of the hardest group to  
8 reach, right, in terms of the redistricting job?

9           MS. WHITE: Well, of course it is. Of course it  
10 is. But you know what it's just like -- and I thought  
11 about that because I know -- like I said, we have that one  
12 area mainly in my -- you know, not too far from where --  
13 in my zip code is the Vietnamese area. I don't see them  
14 involved. I don't see them involved at all. How do I get  
15 there? They don't come to my church.

16           But I do know people that I work -- I worked  
17 with one individual that was Vietnamese and I would start  
18 there. I would start with what I know, who I know, and  
19 find out from them how do I reach, and who do I reach, and  
20 who do I contact?

21           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I've heard you say on a  
22 couple different occasions that the State's fiscal  
23 condition is a significant concern for you. And I  
24 wondered whether you're concerned that fiscal restraints  
25 might impair the Commission's ability to properly outreach

1 to the public and, if so, how you would overcome that?

2 MS. WHITE: Supposedly, according to the  
3 whatever, it shouldn't, but it can't help. I think we all  
4 have the responsibility, anybody on the Commission has a  
5 responsibility to be as conservative as they can with  
6 their money. And know just because you have it there go  
7 ahead and use it.

8 But you have to -- I know every meeting has to  
9 be open, everybody has to have the ability to find out  
10 what's going on, and I don't know how they're going to do  
11 it, with teleconferencing and everything that they have to  
12 do. But that will take time, that will take money.

13 But will the people be willing, would the  
14 Commission be willing to do things without getting paid?  
15 I don't know. I would. If you're trying to get a job  
16 done, you want to get the job done.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't have any further  
18 questions?

19 Panelists?

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: No, I don't have any.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I do.

23 I just wanted to get your take, as an EEO  
24 investigator --

25 MS. WHITE: Oh, okay.

1                   PANEL MEMBER SPANO:  -- from your point of view.  
2   What does equal opportunity mean to you?

3                   MS. WHITE:  Equal opportunity is the ability,  
4   regardless, there again with your race, your gender, your  
5   sexual orientation, whatever, you have the right to be  
6   treated equally.

7                   PANEL MEMBER SPANO:  Okay.

8                   MS. WHITE:  And I had three investigations, one  
9   was a woman that wanted to get into the one area and she  
10  couldn't because it was an all man type thing, and they  
11  didn't want a woman in there.

12                  And then I had another one where it was a  
13  manager and he had made a career out of filing EEO  
14  complaints.  Because he got time off for -- so, he just  
15  would file.  I think when I got to him, I think he'd filed  
16  17 of them.

17                  So, I mean, and then there was another one when  
18  the individual was not treated fairly and she had been put  
19  in for a promotion, and she had all the qualifications,  
20  and she got the promotion.  And when they found out that  
21  she got the BQL, the best qualified, the manager raised it  
22  so she wouldn't be able to be --

23                  PANEL MEMBER SPANO:  You were able to prove  
24  that?

25                  MS. WHITE:  Yeah, I sure was.  I was able to

1 prove all of them. Because I saw the thing with the race  
2 remark.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you believe the IRS has  
4 taken big strides to overcome these types of issues?

5 MS. WHITE: Oh, of course. Of course.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you believe that equal  
7 opportunity laws are still necessary, now?

8 MS. WHITE: Oh, of course.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In what way?

10 MS. WHITE: Well, you just have to make sure --  
11 they probably don't have that much to do anymore, but you  
12 have to make sure that -- if you know they're there -- if  
13 you know they're there and you need them.

14 When I did that, I didn't do it like a full time  
15 job, they would call me and they said we have a complaint,  
16 and they said it's been reviewed and they have a valid  
17 complaint. And then you would go. But you never went in  
18 your own district, you went away, you know, where nobody  
19 knew who you were and you didn't have -- you know, you  
20 just went in there and did your job.

21 But the fact that they were there helped.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: But if there's a process in  
23 place maybe they're not -- the laws might not be necessary  
24 anymore?

25 MS. WHITE: You know what, I haven't worked for

1 the Internal Revenue for -- but I don't -- you know, if  
2 you look at the makeup of the Internal Revenue you -- I --  
3 I'm very proud of what we have.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

5 MS. WHITE: Uh-hum.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have 22 minutes left,  
7 if you'd care to make a closing statement?

8 MS. WHITE: Well, the only thing I want to tell  
9 you is I began watching you on TV for a while, and then I  
10 said you know what, I don't want to watch you anymore  
11 because I feel like I'd be cheating. I said, you know  
12 what, I want the answers to be mine and not what --  
13 because at the beginning there was a Byer, or a Breyer, or  
14 whatever, and I said, boy, he's really good. And I said,  
15 no, I don't want to take, I want what I tell you to be  
16 what I tell you, not what the other people tell you.

17 But I don't envy any of you your job. You've  
18 done a remarkable job. I can't even -- I don't know how  
19 you did it.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We had a lot of help.

21 MS. WHITE: I don't know how you're continuing.  
22 Even if you're on the downward, I don't know how you did  
23 it.

24 So, other than that, thank you very much for  
25 your time. I really -- I really enjoyed meeting or

1 looking at you here.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Thank you very much.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you for coming.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you for coming to  
7 see us.

8 MS. WHITE: Uh-huh.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's recess until 4:29.

10 (Off the record at 3:53 p.m.)

11 (Back on the record at 4:29 p.m.)

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's go back on record.

13 Our last interviewee of the day is Ms. Thais  
14 Armenta. And are you ready to begin?

15 MS. ARMENTA: I am.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.

17 What specific skills do you believe a good  
18 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills which do you  
19 possess, which do you not possess and how will you  
20 compensate for it?

21 Is there anything in your life that would  
22 prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of the  
23 duties of a Commissioner?

24 MS. ARMENTA: In addition to the requirements as  
25 outlined in Proposition 11, analytical skills, an ability



1 to be impartial, and an appreciation for California's  
2 geographic and demographic diversity, the following list  
3 of ten attributes are ones that I believe an effective  
4 Redistricting Commissioner should also possess at least a  
5 preponderance of.

6           Number one, the ability to handle the pressure,  
7 stresses, and public scrutiny of this position, and the  
8 ability to deal professionally and gracefully with the  
9 public and the press.

10           There has been much public comment and  
11 discussion in California and across the country about this  
12 Commission. It is an historic and high profile venture.

13           I also believe the Commissioner needs to be  
14 articulate, personable, and able to present a positive  
15 image of the Commission to the public in order to  
16 effectively participate in public meetings throughout the  
17 State.

18           Number two, the ability to be prepared. To be  
19 an effective Commissioner, one will need to look ahead,  
20 gather and research information as needed, anticipate what  
21 may arise and plan how to deal with all scenarios.

22           Number three, an effective Commissioner will  
23 need to be competent at office management and skilled with  
24 modern technology. The Commissioners will need to be able  
25 to effectively and efficiently manage and prioritize their

1 own work and schedules, as well as effectively manage  
2 their staff and resources, and should possess the ability  
3 to shift those priorities as may be needed.

4           And effective Commissioner will have a  
5 reasonable amount of skill with Word, Excel and the  
6 internet, as well as a familiarity with computerized  
7 budget, timelines and schedules, finance concepts and,  
8 perhaps, human resources. An understanding of the  
9 important of and a familiarity with social networking  
10 sites may be beneficial, as well.

11           Number four, I believe that an effective  
12 Commissioner will have the ability to stay focused on the  
13 best interests of this State and the mandates governing  
14 the Commission with respect to the law, the Constitution  
15 of California, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and  
16 Proposition 11.

17           An effective Commissioner will need to  
18 appreciate and understand the needs and concerns of  
19 diverse communities of interest and, to the extent  
20 possible and practical, reconcile these concerns and needs  
21 with those mandates.

22           Number five, an effective Commissioner will need  
23 to be a doer, a problem solver, someone who can meet each  
24 challenge with the intent of finding an equitable solution  
25 and is not afraid to think of innovative solutions and

1 find a way to practically implement them.

2           Number six, an effective Commissioner will have  
3 the ability to teach and share knowledge and concepts with  
4 groups of any size, and to understand and incorporate new  
5 information as may be necessary.

6           An effective Commissioner should be a good  
7 communicator, both as an orator and in written form.

8           Number seven, an effective Commissioner will not  
9 be afraid to seek outside guidance, counsel, or  
10 assistance, and will seek additional information and do  
11 research to fully understand a concept, concern or  
12 challenge.

13           Number eight, an effective Commissioner will be  
14 able to work with the Commission as a whole and with  
15 individual Commissioners on a one-to-one basis. An  
16 effective Commissioner will be able to listen to opposing  
17 opinions and work toward an equitable solution that does  
18 not necessarily please everyone on the Commission, but one  
19 that keeps the mandates governing the Commission at the  
20 forefront.

21           Number nine, an effective Commissioner will have  
22 a deep respect for the position which has been entrusted  
23 to him or her. They will fully embrace the laws and rules  
24 governing their position and they will understand the  
25 confidentiality and importance of the information and

1 tasks that have been entrusted to them.

2           Number ten, an effective Commissioner will have  
3 a deep desire to participate in this Commission to make  
4 California a better place for the people who live here and  
5 to insure that the people of this State are represented  
6 the way that they wish to be represented.

7           And effective Commissioner will also have an  
8 enthusiasm for this process and an appreciation for the  
9 opportunity afforded them.

10           I believe that I possess most of these skills to  
11 some extent. I'm articulate and an effective writer. I'm  
12 a competent person and I am a doer. I know how to run an  
13 office, organize and manage a staff, and prioritize my  
14 work.

15           I have over 15 years' experience doing financial  
16 management, bookkeeping, including payroll and office  
17 management and I am very well organized, with excellent  
18 attention to detail.

19           I am competent with computers, computer programs  
20 and technology. I jokingly refer to my i-Phone as my best  
21 friend and understand the importance of social networking  
22 to young people and, in growing numbers, to those of who  
23 are older.

24           I am well known as always been very well  
25 prepared for any scenario or situation. I am known to

1 have an extremely analytical mind and can see facts and  
2 stay focused, even while understanding, appreciating and  
3 incorporating the concerns and needs of others.

4 I treat all people with equal respect and with  
5 equal appreciation and consideration for the way in which  
6 their lives differ from mine. I have a deep respect for  
7 everyone's opinion, even if it is not the same as my own.

8 I work well within groups, listen effectively to  
9 other opinions and can often find middle ground that  
10 provides a satisfactory solution.

11 I take very seriously the trust and obligations  
12 conferred upon this position. I take all of my  
13 responsibilities very seriously.

14 I also have a deep desire to serve on this  
15 Commission because California is where I live, where my  
16 children live, where their children live or are likely to  
17 live.

18 I also care about this State because it is where  
19 my parents are from. It is the place that my grandparents  
20 emigrated to, and it is the place where my sense of family  
21 heritage was born.

22 I am certain that there is much that I don't now  
23 with respect to serving on the Citizens Redistricting  
24 Commission and the work and responsibilities that come  
25 with the position, but I do know that I'm a very quick

1 learner and that I adapt to new circumstances and  
2 assimilate new information quickly.

3           Between now and the production of any final  
4 certified maps, I intend to continue learning and  
5 understanding the redistricting process and this  
6 unbelievable opportunity to serve on this historic  
7 Commission, and to try to do my best to serve the citizens  
8 of California.

9           While I have great respect and appreciation for  
10 and am in fact proud of the diversity of this State in the  
11 abstract, I need to better understand and learn more about  
12 the specific geographic and demographic diversity of each  
13 region of California, and the concerns of the people  
14 living in specific areas.

15           I intend to research each area thoroughly prior  
16 to the drawing of any maps and before attending any public  
17 meetings in any area.

18           I want to know, for each area, the specific  
19 needs and concerns of the people in that area, beyond what  
20 I know from any personal experiences or history that I may  
21 have.

22           While I have family living in many areas of  
23 California, I have really only viewed the region through  
24 my prism of my relationship with them.

25           For areas that I have visited outside the

1 context of visiting family, I have my impressions and  
2 experiences of the locale from a tourist stand point. It  
3 is always exciting to me to visit new places and to see  
4 and interact with people from many different backgrounds,  
5 perspectives and histories.

6 I will also rely on the opinions and reports of  
7 other Commissioners to understand the concerns of citizens  
8 in any area that I did not attend the public meeting for.

9 I further intend to tap into the experience,  
10 expertise and knowledge of the other Commissioners in  
11 order to fulfill my obligation to the Commission to the  
12 best of my ability.

13 To my knowledge, there is nothing that would  
14 prohibit or impair my ability to perform all of the duties  
15 of a Commissioner.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have about 13 minutes  
17 remaining.

18 Describe a circumstance from your personal  
19 experience where you had to work with others to resolve a  
20 conflict or difference of opinion. Please describe the  
21 issue and explain your role in addressing and resolving  
22 the conflict.

23 If you are selected to serve on the Citizens  
24 Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would resolve  
25 conflict that may arise among the Commissioners?

1 MS. ARMENTA: As the mother of three children, I  
2 resolved countless conflicts and differences of opinion on  
3 an almost daily basis.

4 However, in a less familial context, when  
5 working with people of many different backgrounds and  
6 differing agendas, while participating in various board  
7 and parent groups associated with my children over the  
8 years, and in the work place, there are often  
9 opportunities to practice conflict resolution.

10 As an example, while working as an office  
11 manager for a Sacramento landscaping company, the owner  
12 hired a foreman to run construction projects in the  
13 Sacramento area. Both men were extremely competent and  
14 had been working in the landscaping trade for many years.

15 With two such strong personalities, conflict and  
16 disagreement were inevitable. The owner would complain to  
17 me about the foreman and the foreman would complain to me  
18 about the owner.

19 Both had valid points, but neither understood  
20 the position of the other and both were growing more and  
21 more frustrated.

22 I suggested, organized and ran a weekly  
23 management meeting that included me, the owner and the  
24 foreman. With me acting as mediator, it allowed the two  
25 of them to hear and understand the other's point of view.



1 This provided for all management being on the same page  
2 and working toward a common goal of success for the  
3 company.

4 It also provided a forum for venting  
5 frustrations and hearing another perspective. The end  
6 results were better working relationships, a smoother  
7 running and more efficient company that was more  
8 prosperous.

9 I believe that I would approach conflict  
10 resolution with the Commission in much the same I've  
11 handled other group conflicts. I would be creative in my  
12 approach to the resolution of conflict and much like my  
13 example I would try to be -- to create an atmosphere or  
14 forum wherein each party might hear and appreciate the  
15 other's opinion or viewpoint.

16 All of the Commissioners will have been through  
17 petty intense selection process, so it's pretty certain  
18 that each Commissioners will be competent, intelligent,  
19 and have decided strengths that they are bringing to the  
20 table.

21 Each Commissioner will possess skills and  
22 expertise that will be valuable to the rest of the  
23 Commission.

24 I believe that everyone's opinion needs to be  
25 heard, valued, considered, and that by applying the

1 mandates governing the Commission and helping the other  
2 Commissioners stay focused on the goals of the Commission,  
3 we would be able to come to a satisfactory solution, stay  
4 calm, stay focused, and validate and appreciate the  
5 opinions of others would be my road map for conflict  
6 resolution within the Commission.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
8 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will  
9 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
10 the Commission's work to harm the state and, if so, in  
11 what ways?

12 MS. ARMENTA: I believe that the maps provided  
13 by this Commission will have a huge impact on the State  
14 economically and politically. Finally, communities of  
15 interest can be kept intact, vote dilution can be avoided  
16 to a large extent, and districts will be drawn in a more  
17 compact and less dispersed fashion.

18 While these results are certainly important and  
19 groundbreaking, to me it is the human impact that will be  
20 the most significant. To have the redistricting maps  
21 drawn up by a Commission designed to be, quote/unquote,  
22 free from legislative influence, is a significant paradigm  
23 shift, which will have an impact not only on California,  
24 but on the other states of the Union.

25 The ripple effect of this Commission will be

1 felt across California, in other states, and perhaps by  
2 all the citizens of the United States. This, alone, will  
3 provide a much-needed sense of pride to the people of  
4 California. It will afford an honest representation of  
5 the people, taking into account that which is important  
6 and significant to people of any given region or area.

7           With the economy in the state it is in, many  
8 people feel disillusioned with government and the  
9 tarnishing of the American dream.

10           This Commission is the kind of positive event  
11 that California needs. California's a State whose history  
12 is rich with innovative thinking and trend-setting  
13 actions. Because of the Citizen's Redistricting  
14 Commission, Californians will once again feel enfranchised  
15 and empowered, and this can only benefit this great State.

16           Having fellow citizens of the State of  
17 California in charge of drawing new district boundaries  
18 and keeping the process transparent, with plenty of  
19 community input, empowers people and allows them to truly  
20 feel that their priorities and concerns are represented.

21           Groups and communities of interest that, in the  
22 past, may have been systematically denied their right to  
23 be represented, will now be a part of the process and feel  
24 that their votes count. This is a good thing.

25           It will go a long way to making each vote really

1 count and for the citizens of the State to feel that their  
2 vote makes a difference and truly represents them.

3 As I mentioned before, I believe that the  
4 confidence in the system they will feel, and the feeling  
5 of enfranchisement and empowerment that they gain will do  
6 more for the people of California than the actual act of  
7 redistricting.

8 People who feel that they have some control over  
9 their own fate are people who are much more likely to  
10 become involved in other areas of interest or concern to  
11 them, and this can only make California stronger and more  
12 prosperous in the long run.

13 While overall I believe that this Commission and  
14 any Commission that may follow I in the future can only  
15 benefit the State and by example, perhaps, the rest of the  
16 country, there is always the possibility that some may  
17 perceive harm has been done, even unintentionally.

18 As with every past redistricting, there are  
19 groups that are unhappy with the results and in some cases  
20 have even filed suit. By adhering to the mandates as  
21 stated in Proposition 11, the State Constitution and the  
22 Voting Rights Act, I do not believe that the Commission  
23 can intentionally harm the State.

24 It remains to be seen, however, what the voters  
25 of California do with the new districts and what the long-

1 term effect will be.

2 Personally, I feel overall the process will be  
3 overwhelmingly beneficial to California.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation  
5 where you've had to work as part of a group to achieve a  
6 common goal. Tell us about the goal, describe your role  
7 within the group, and tell us how the group worked or did  
8 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal?

9 If you are selected to serve on the Citizens  
10 Redistricting Commission, tell us what you would do to  
11 foster collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure  
12 the Commission meets its legal deadlines?

13 MS. ARMENTA: As I mentioned in my supplemental  
14 application, my youngest son has earned a position on the  
15 Sacramento Valley Youth 17 Select rugby team, now for the  
16 past two years. The team is made up of students from high  
17 schools from all over the Sacramento Valley. These boys  
18 practice for several weeks and then attend one or more  
19 tournaments.

20 Within a very short period of time, from about  
21 mid-April to about mid-June, I am tasked with organizing  
22 the parents and players so that we can do a great deal in  
23 that very short amount of time.

24 I am the team coordinator, or team mom, as the  
25 coaches and players call me, and by creating a solid

1 communication system with the parents and players, and by  
2 involving the other parents and capitalizing upon their  
3 individual skills and strengths, I have been able to  
4 create an infrastructure and framework for the team that  
5 allows our players to thrive and succeed.

6 I am called upon to utilize many of the skills  
7 that I believe would also be need as a Citizens  
8 Redistricting Commissioner.

9 Because the team is made up of young men from  
10 many different socioeconomic situations, and many  
11 different cultures, it is important to be able to  
12 appreciate the diversity of the group and of each  
13 individual player and family.

14 It is also important to treat each player with  
15 the same respect, so that the players treat each other in  
16 like fashion.

17 The team had players who were well off  
18 financially, and those who were not. The team had Pacific  
19 Islanders, Asians, South Africans, Latinos, South  
20 Americans, African Americans, and players of European  
21 decent.

22 It was important to understand and work with  
23 these players and their families while respecting their  
24 different perspectives and cultures in order to achieve  
25 the goals of the team while adhering to a very short

1 timeline.

2           It is an incredibly intense and busy couple of  
3 months and without my ability to organize, to prioritize,  
4 to coordinate the assistance and cooperation of the  
5 parents and players, and to keep everyone focused and  
6 moving forward, we would not be able to achieve our goals.

7           It is by breaking the large concepts and tasks  
8 down into small or manageable tasks, staying organized and  
9 treating each player and family equally that I am able to  
10 successfully meet the deadlines and provide a stable  
11 environment for the team to rely on.

12           For the past two years, the coach has been free  
13 to concentrate on coaching and I have been able to  
14 coordinate parent and player effort to create a team  
15 atmosphere that has allowed the Sacramento Youth 17 Select  
16 Rugby Team to go undefeated at tournaments this year, at  
17 Treasure Island and in Denver, Colorado.

18           Much like the Youth 17 Rugby Team, I believe  
19 that everyone will be bringing different strengths and  
20 weaknesses to the Commission. And it is my hope that  
21 because of these strengths and weaknesses, natural  
22 collaborations form.

23           In addition to this, however, I excel at keeping  
24 those in a group focused on the actual goal and to not get  
25 too distracted by the minutia and other outside

1   distractions.

2               By keeping the final goal at the forefront, it  
3   is natural to form collaborations with people also focused  
4   on that goal, despite any personal disagreement or  
5   differences of opinion.

6               I, myself, have worked successfully with  
7   individuals that I do not agree with, personally, but I  
8   was able to keep focused on our mutual goal and that aided  
9   me in setting aside my personal feelings for the benefit  
10  of the group and the achievement of the goal.

11              I believe that I have the ability to understand  
12  the views of others and to consider those views within the  
13  overall picture, whether those views differ from my own or  
14  not.

15              I believe that it's important to treat people  
16  well and to make them feel validated. This concept goes a  
17  long way in fostering good working relationships and  
18  collaborations.

19              I'm a friendly, outgoing person and I am quickly  
20  confided in. These attributes will allow for me to foster  
21  relationships and collaborations with other Commissioners.

22              I would suggest and encourage the Commission to  
23  develop a timeline with milestones and deadlines noted,  
24  large tasks can be broken down where practical into  
25  smaller tasks, and tasks can be assigned to individual



1 Commissioners or groups of Commissioners.

2 I would encourage frequent follow ups and status  
3 checks on specific tasks, so that the tasks, priorities,  
4 assignments and workloads can be shifted as needed to  
5 accomplish the milestones and meet the deadlines.

6 Fostering the idea that we will succeed not by  
7 individual task, but by working as group overall will, I  
8 believe, foster a desire to work together or collaborate  
9 to meet deadlines and achieve goals.

10 By keeping the Commission focused on the legal  
11 requirements and mandates governing it, and by adhering to  
12 an agreed upon timeline and working together to see that  
13 milestones are met, I believe that the Commission can and  
14 will meet all legal deadlines.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have about three  
16 minutes and 45 seconds remaining.

17 A considerable amount of the Commission's work  
18 will involve meeting with people from all over California,  
19 who come from very different backgrounds and very  
20 different perspectives. If you are selected to serve on  
21 the Commission, tell us about the specific skills you  
22 possess that will make you effective at interacting with  
23 the public.

24 MS. ARMENTA: As I mentioned, previously, I'm a  
25 very outgoing and friendly person who is generally well

1 received and quickly trusted by people.

2 I am able to present a non-threatening,  
3 compassionate side to diffuse and deal with over-excited,  
4 or difficult attendees at public meetings.

5 I am sincere and honest and am able to convey  
6 these traits to further enhance the Commission and the  
7 redistricting process as open and transparent. I am a  
8 competent individual and I have an excellent memory and  
9 ability to think on my feet. I'm a good public speaker  
10 and a good listener.

11 I always try to be prepared by doing research  
12 and making notes and outlines that I can refer to. I am  
13 able to convey new or different concepts to others  
14 verbally and in writing.

15 I'm able to cut through the fluff and quickly  
16 distinguish the central issue.

17 I believe that because I'm a minority and I  
18 represent some percentage of California's diverse  
19 population, I hope to validate the Commission as  
20 representative of the population of California.

21 At the same time I think I'm also a good  
22 representative of an everyday person, the person who lives  
23 down the street or that you work with on the school PTA.

24 I've spent a good deal of my life traveling and  
25 adapting to new environments and it has made me the person

1 that I am today. While living in different areas of the  
2 country and around the world, I have lived among people of  
3 different cultures who have lives very different from  
4 mine.

5 I have been quickly accepted and become an  
6 active part of their community.

7 My daughter, who is currently in law school, is  
8 gay and I am accepted and often a second mom to her  
9 friends and girlfriends. I am interested in and  
10 appreciate the challenges that they face and overcome.  
11 They are vibrant, intelligent young men and women and  
12 their lifestyle and choices are to be applauded and  
13 respected.

14 My older son, a cancer survivor and postal  
15 employee, lives a very different life than that of his  
16 sister but, again, I am accepted and loved by his friends,  
17 and I value their opinions, choices and lifestyles, too.

18 Even with my younger teenage son, I'm usually  
19 the favorite mom, and I believe that with all three of my  
20 children and their friends it is because I respect and  
21 value their diverse lifestyles, cultures and opinions.

22 I always welcome and enjoy the opportunity to  
23 meet new people and I am interested in their lives, and  
24 concerns and plights.

25 I believe that they know this and they, in turn,

1 appreciate my interest.

2 I believe that I will make people feel at ease  
3 with the Commission and aid them in understanding the  
4 process and the importance of their input.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you very much. Good  
7 afternoon, Ms. Armenta.

8 MS. ARMENTA: Good afternoon.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Well, I have to compliment your  
10 reading skills. I tried to keep up with the speed and I'm  
11 impressed.

12 MS. ARMENTA: Thank you.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: I have quite a few follow-up  
14 questions on your response to the standard questions.

15 Let me start off with, you know, your  
16 description of the skills that are necessary for the  
17 Commission's work. You mentioned, as part of your  
18 description of the management skills, ability to manage  
19 this huge task, a big part of that, if I heard you  
20 correctly, you mentioned the prioritization of the tasks  
21 and shifting priorities during the work of the Commission.

22 Could you elaborate on that? Number one, let's  
23 pretend that you are one of the eight Commissioners, and  
24 it's December, what are your priorities?

25 And then let's pretend that it's two months down

1 the road and you have new information, what type of  
2 information would you receive and what factors?

3 I think what I'm concerned about is when you say  
4 being open to shift priorities as you work through this  
5 redistricting or redrawing the lines, what are some of  
6 those factors that may cause a shift in those priorities?

7 MS. ARMENTA: I think in general I'm referring  
8 to the concept that if I was one of the 14 Commissioners,  
9 as the entire Board is seated, that I would like to  
10 encourage them to have a timeline with milestones, and  
11 that specific tasks that we've arrived at, as a Commission  
12 are broken up, you know, and assigned to different  
13 Commissioners or groups of Commissioners.

14 And if we're approaching a milestone and I'm  
15 working on my tasks over here, and completing them, you  
16 know, within the timeframe to hit a milestone, and I find  
17 out another Commissioner's not, well, I'm going to need to  
18 shift some of my priorities to get that amount of work  
19 done as well, so that when we get to the milestone  
20 everybody's there at the same time and we can move on from  
21 there and we've met that deadline.

22 I think that's what I meant by that.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, thank you.

24 MS. ARMENTA: Does that make sense?

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, and you kind of touched on

1 the next follow-up question that I had, which was related  
2 to your response to question number four, you mentioned  
3 the large tasks versus smaller tasks, and sine you  
4 mentioned that, any ideas about what you -- well, what do  
5 you mean by large tasks versus smaller tasks, is there any  
6 specifics to which tasks are somewhat related to the  
7 priorities, large versus small or --

8 MS. ARMENTA: Right.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: -- can you tell us a little more  
10 about that?

11 MS. ARMENTA: Can I give you -- like I said, I'm  
12 not an expert on this redistricting thing, but my overview  
13 is that we need to determine different areas, different  
14 interests, trying to keep communities of interest  
15 together, being cognizant of the population so that we can  
16 have relatively equal amounts of population and that's --  
17 that's kind of a big task, you know, we need to get these  
18 districts proportional in population and keep communities  
19 of interest together, so we're going to need to go out and  
20 talk to these communities, so we assign different  
21 Commissioners that task to go out to talk to these  
22 communities to determine the populations and how these  
23 communities can be kept intact, in smaller areas, and then  
24 that's the -- those all come together to complete the  
25 bigger task.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, I got you, thank you.

2 And you mentioned that to determine how to keep  
3 the communities intact. What would be your goal, when you  
4 go out to these communities, what kind of information  
5 would you gather and how do you define these communities?

6 MS. ARMENTA: Well, there are -- the way the  
7 logistics are drawn, now, you might have a part of a  
8 desert community with a city area, you know, that they  
9 don't share the same interests, they don't have the same  
10 concerns. In desert areas water concerns -- well, in all  
11 of Southern California water concerns are very big. And  
12 when you have, you know, a kind of sparse population in a  
13 desert area that's combined with a city, that kind of  
14 sparse population, now, really doesn't have a voice.  
15 Because, obviously, the concentrated people of the city,  
16 their interests are going to out vote the sparser, more  
17 spread out population.

18 So, it's important to be able to have the  
19 districts me, you know, compact and not disbursed like  
20 that, but have appreciation for these people's interests  
21 aren't exactly the same as these people's interests. So,  
22 we need to make sure that when we're redistricting, either  
23 there are equal amounts of both of those populations in a  
24 district, you know, both of those communities of interest,  
25 or that they're in separate districts from one another so

1     that they don't kind of dilute each other's vote.

2                   CHAIR AHMADI:   Another follow-up question based  
3     on your response.   I understand that you're not an expert  
4     in redistricting and this is the first time that we're  
5     doing it in California.   But to the extent that you can, I  
6     would appreciate if you can share with us some of your  
7     ideas about how important is it to keep the districts  
8     compact?   That's the word that you used.   How important is  
9     it, what factors contributes to the shape of the district?

10                  MS. ARMENTA:   Well, it's extremely important  
11     because I believe that that's in the State Constitution  
12     and Proposition 11.   I mean, I think that's, you know, an  
13     issue that's gone before, actually, the Supreme Court of  
14     the United States many times, that they need to be  
15     compact.   That is that the edges of them need to be  
16     basically equal distance from the center of the district.

17                  It's very important to do that so that you don't  
18     have disbursed districts that kind of stretch out into  
19     other areas that don't necessarily share the same  
20     interests and concerns as, you know, like a city versus a  
21     desert.

22                  CHAIR AHMADI:   So, let me ask you a kind of  
23     technical question, but I'm not expecting a complete  
24     response.

25                  MS. ARMENTA:   Okay.



1 CHAIR AHMADI: Which one is important, equal  
2 population or compactness for a district?

3 MS. ARMENTA: That the -- I think that, ideally,  
4 we'd like to have both. But I think that the equal  
5 population, as far as legally and what's been, you know,  
6 gone through courts and whatnot, and been upheld, the  
7 equal population is more important than the relative  
8 compactness of the district, itself.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you, just wanted to  
10 clarify in my mind. Thank you.

11 MS. ARMENTA: I don't know if that would have.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: In response to standard question  
13 number three, if I heard your response correctly, you  
14 basically said that overall you didn't see that much harm  
15 should redistricting effort go wrong. Did I hear you  
16 correctly?

17 MS. ARMENTA: Well, that was qualified with if  
18 we followed the mandates that have been set down for the  
19 Redistricting Commission to follow --

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, okay.

21 MS. ARMENTA: -- that it would be very difficult  
22 to harm the State because we have followed the law and we  
23 have followed the directives that were given to us, so it  
24 would be very difficult.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so let me -- I have a

1 follow-up question on that and let me read this to you  
2 because it's somewhat long. In your mind, how should the  
3 Commission go about deciding where to start redrawing the  
4 lines, what do you think are the options, which do you  
5 prefer and why? Do you think the Commission's decision  
6 where to start redrawing the lines substantially impact  
7 the final maps and why? And please ask me if I should  
8 read this -- repeat the question?

9 MS. ARMENTA: It is likely that you will have  
10 to.

11 I believe that the most difficult areas to  
12 redistrict will be heavily populated, around Los Angeles,  
13 around San Francisco, around Sacramento because in those  
14 areas, also, are very high concentrations of, you now,  
15 minority groups and other communities of interest.

16 And so, because those are the most difficult, I  
17 would probably start with at least identifying the  
18 communities of interest that we ideally would like to keep  
19 intact, and then kind of move out from those areas to try  
20 and include like communities of interest, you know, that  
21 are further outreaching than the cities, themselves.

22 And I don't remember the rest of the question.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: The last part was do you think  
24 the Commission's decision where to start redrawing the  
25 lines substantially impact the final maps and why?

1 MS. ARMENTA: Well, I mean, there have to be a  
2 certain amount of districts and there have to be, you  
3 know, for the Assembly, for the Senate, for the Board of  
4 Equalization. So, where they start, no, I guess I don't  
5 really think that that is going to make a difference in  
6 the final map.

7 Because, you know, you may start in one place  
8 and say, okay, this would make a good district, but then  
9 you'd find out, well, that wouldn't really make a good  
10 district, or that wouldn't make the population equal and  
11 stuff. So, things have to be rethought, and priorities  
12 have to be shifted, and you need to look at it from, you  
13 know, a different perspective and go over it again, or  
14 that kind of thing, in order to -- it's going to be a big  
15 puzzle. If you've played the game online, it's not easy.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: I had some training and I can  
17 relate to that.

18 MS. ARMENTA: Okay.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, that's challenging. Thank  
20 you so much.

21 Let me -- how much time do I have? Ten minutes,  
22 okay, good.

23 Referring to your application, in your interest  
24 statement you mention about -- about your interest -- let  
25 me just read something real quick. You're talking about

1 children and your grandchildren inheriting the State and  
2 as part of your interest you are indicating that it will  
3 be helping them to voice their concerns, and the  
4 redistricting done today will also help future -- or all  
5 Californians to voice their concerns.

6 What are those voices?

7 MS. ARMENTA: They're votes. If you have a vote  
8 and it is, you know, one vote counts per person --

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

10 MS. ARMENTA: -- then by redistricting so that  
11 communities of interest aren't diluted and you voting in  
12 somebody else's community of interest doesn't count, so  
13 you -- then they do count and you feel that they count.

14 You know, if you're in a group that's, you know,  
15 completely in a district that has another differing  
16 community of interest or, you know, populations of people  
17 that the vote counter to you, and there's only one of you,  
18 and there's many of them, then you don't feel that your  
19 vote really counts.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. And what are some of the  
21 concerns?

22 MS. ARMENTA: As I've said, I mean, some of them  
23 are, you know, have to do with where they live. In  
24 Southern California, you know, there are huge water issues  
25 that are very important to them, that maybe up here in the

1 valley we don't think about as much because it's not as  
2 important up here where we have a lot more water than they  
3 do.

4 Coastal towns would have, you know, vastly  
5 different concerns than desert areas. They might have a  
6 lot of concern with tourism and, you know, different  
7 things that have to do with the view and, you know,  
8 building ordinances and that kind of thing.

9 Whereas, you know, people who live more out in  
10 the desert, that might not be as important to them and  
11 they might have completely different interests and  
12 concerns for where they are.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

14 Can you tell the Panel how your life experience  
15 and approach to problem identification and problem solving  
16 will benefit you, as a Commissioner?

17 MS. ARMENTA: I'm the type of person that  
18 usually gets the problem solved. Maybe it's not the way  
19 that everybody else thought it would be solved. And most  
20 problems can be solved and I believe that, and that is my  
21 approach to any type of problem. I break it down, look at  
22 it, and figure out what steps I need to take or what can  
23 be done.

24 And there is a solution. And I think that I'm  
25 very good at that, at looking at problems and figuring

1 out, okay, stop, take a breath, now let's just -- this can  
2 be solved, this can be done. And I think I'm very good at  
3 that alone, and in a group.

4           You know, most everyone that I know calls me for  
5 that very thing, to help them solve a problem. You know,  
6 at work when somebody's upset because something can't be  
7 done, I can think of a way to get that thing done.

8           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thanks again.

9           You mentioned that you're not afraid to stand up  
10 for what you believe is right. Can you share an example  
11 from your life experiences, a situation where you stood  
12 for what you believe is right, and what happened?

13           MS. ARMENTA: There's a lot of them, especially  
14 when you have kids. A lot of times you have to stand up  
15 for what is -- what you think is right.

16           With my son's high school rugby team, there's a  
17 board that -- it's the fundraising committee for the rugby  
18 and they want -- they try, often, to make a lot of the  
19 decisions of actually running the club, and the club  
20 actually belongs to the school and, in fact, belongs to  
21 the boys that are in the club. And I have, on many  
22 occasions, stood up at the board meetings and said, you  
23 know, you can't do that. It's not your club, it's their  
24 club. It's up to the boys, they get to decide, and it's  
25 up to their coach.

1           You know, they work as a team and it's their  
2 club. Because you're a fundraising board, you don't get  
3 to make these decisions for them. It doesn't always make  
4 me popular, but it makes me feel good about myself.

5           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you very much. I don't  
6 have a question at this point.

7           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

8           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.  
9 Hello.

10          MS. ARMENTA: Hello.

11          VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In your application you  
12 talk about that California has changed since the last  
13 redistricting effort with respect to population needs and  
14 interests.

15               How would you describe those changes and then,  
16 as a Commissioner how would you take those changes into  
17 effect to help you redistrict?

18          MS. ARMENTA: Well, I know, I mean just from  
19 what I've read, as I've said I don't really have any  
20 experience redistricting, but the population of California  
21 has been moving east, away from the expensive coastal  
22 towns and more into the affordable valleys that we have  
23 here. The definitely changes, you know, a lot of things  
24 about where the people are now.

25               I don't think that there is, you know, such a

1 huge shift that now we're going to see the middle of the  
2 Central Valley as populated as L.A., or anything, but it  
3 does definitely change the communities of people that are  
4 in the areas, now.

5           And the population of California, from also what  
6 I understand and have read, is not growing at the rate  
7 that it has in the past. So, you know, that's something  
8 that needs to be taken into consideration, too, you know,  
9 potentially where people would go to. But now, not as  
10 many are coming in.

11           We would -- as the Commission, you know, we  
12 would use that information from this most current census  
13 to determine, you know, where the more concentrated areas  
14 of people are now and if, since the last one, you know,  
15 communities of interest have changed. And we would, you  
16 know, obviously be having public meetings and getting that  
17 information, you know, from the people there.

18           In the Sacramento Valley, I think that over the  
19 last ten years since I've lived here, the people have a  
20 lot more interest in water now than they did ten years ago  
21 when it was, you know, abundant and free. And now, these  
22 are more of a concern.

23           And all of that kind of thing the Commissioners  
24 will need to take into consideration when talking to  
25 groups of people and understanding what is important to



1    them and what binds them together as a community of  
2    interest.

3                   VICE CHAIR CAMACHO:   You're familiar with the  
4    Sacramento area and with your family you have touched many  
5    different areas and interests within California.   From  
6    that experience and knowledge that you have with your  
7    family and what you've studied in your life, how would you  
8    use that to help you go out to the Sacramento area and  
9    conduct public meetings?

10                  MS. ARMENTA:   Oh, I think that my life  
11    experience and those of my children are invaluable when  
12    talking with and meeting people.

13                  As I said in the five pre-determined questions,  
14    I honestly believe that I am very much viewed as an  
15    everyday person.   I can relate to the price of groceries,  
16    I can relate when you tell me you're frustrated when you  
17    open your power bill and it's double what it was two  
18    months ago.

19                  I can definitely sympathize with you and you  
20    will believe me, you will believe that I really, truly  
21    understand that, you know.

22                  I can understand when you're frustrated with a  
23    school district, with the way that the size of the classes  
24    are.   I know, I have kids in school and I have grandkids  
25    coming up, you know, going to school.

1           I think that it will aid me to no end, you know,  
2   in public meetings to be able to understand what these  
3   people are talking about.

4           And I live in a very ordinary house, in a very  
5   ordinary neighborhood, you know, and my kids -- my  
6   youngest son in high school, you know, he goes to a high  
7   school that's half extremely affluent children and half  
8   really not affluent children.

9           And so, I talk to and interact with kids from,  
10   you know, the entire span of income and the way they're  
11   brought up in cultures, and all of that, and I can really  
12   relate to most people's, oh, concerns and interests. And  
13   I think that at public meetings they would -- I would  
14   be very believable because I really do mean it when I say  
15   that I understand and I know what you're talking about.  
16   And I think that people would feel comfortable sharing  
17   things with the Commission and understanding that their  
18   input was important to us.

19           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Taking that into account  
20   and your very personable and approachable style, could you  
21   transfer that and go up to a rural community, or to an  
22   inner city and still be able to connect and communicate  
23   with those individuals to gain the knowledge that you need  
24   as a Commissioner?

25           MS. ARMENTA: I believe that I can. I grew up

1 on a farm, and when I lived in England we lived way out in  
2 the country, so I definitely understand what it's like to  
3 be rural.

4 My mother is from a town, originally, in  
5 Arkansas, that has like 700 people in it. That's  
6 incredibly rural.

7 I understand what it's like to live out in the  
8 country. I understand what it's like to not have a 7-11  
9 on every corner and that your priorities are a little bit  
10 different.

11 When we lived in Washington D.C. and my father  
12 was stationed at Andrews, I had many friends that were  
13 from the inner city and I related to them as well, and I  
14 understood what was going on in their life.

15 You know, parts of Sacramento, though not quite  
16 as grand a city, maybe, as San Francisco or L.A., we still  
17 have our inner city and our kids still have friends, you  
18 know, in those areas.

19 I believe that I would understand and that I do  
20 understand some of the problems.

21 I don't live in the inner city and I don't  
22 currently live on a farm, but I still have those  
23 experiences that will allow me to understand what they're  
24 talking about and to appreciate and sympathize with their  
25 concerns.

1                   VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You stated that no specific  
2 group should be granted more importance or weight than the  
3 other group.

4                   How does that position relate to the  
5 redistricting considerations of the communities of  
6 interest and the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

7                   MS. ARMENTA: All -- I mean, I believe that if  
8 you're with a group that, you know, has an interest in  
9 water rights and somebody else is in a group that has an  
10 interest in some kind of housing, you know, height of  
11 buildings initiative, or like that, those are both  
12 important. And they're important to you, and that's the  
13 thing that is key, you know.

14                  In my neighborhood, housing height doesn't make  
15 any difference, water rights don't make any difference.  
16 But that doesn't mean that to that person that it not the  
17 most important thing, that that is key to them. And they  
18 probably can't understand how everybody else can't see  
19 that.

20                  You know, so I can't, personally, and I don't  
21 think the Commissioner should give more weight to one  
22 community of interest over another. And to the best of  
23 our ability and as much as I is practical and possible to  
24 keep both groups intact, you know, as much as we can.

25                  VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How about with taking in

1 consideration the Voting Rights Act of 1965, how would you  
2 deal with that or are you kind of familiar with that?

3 MS. ARMENTA: No, I am, I mean in the sense that  
4 I understand, I have an overview of the Voting Rights Act.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And I don't expect you to  
6 know it legally and everything.

7 MS. ARMENTA: No. I mean, what I understand  
8 about it, it was a response to Congress's determination  
9 that the states were not enforcing the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment and  
10 that they were putting restrictions on voting, like  
11 passing a test, you know, a writing test or a reading test  
12 in order to be able to vote.

13 I know that there is more to the Voting Rights  
14 Act than that.

15 I think that everything the Commission does,  
16 even before, you know, specific interests in water,  
17 specific interests in building height, or whatever the  
18 interests are, they have to, as much as possible, all of  
19 the districts are -- or the first concern is Proposition  
20 11, the Voting Rights Act, the Constitution of California  
21 to make sure that they fit within the mandates of that.

22 And personal concerns of communities of interest  
23 come second to those mandates, aside from the fact that  
24 part of the mandate is to try and keep communities of  
25 interest together. But that's more try and keep, we have

1 to appreciate the actual guidelines that are set forth  
2 clearly in the Voting Rights Act, and Proposition 11, and  
3 the State Constitution first, and then consider the  
4 communities of interest, trying to keep them intact.

5 I think that's where the -- where practical and  
6 possible comes in.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. You mentioned being  
8 an effective speaker within your application. What is the  
9 depth of your experience and what makes you effective at  
10 public speaking?

11 MS. ARMENTA: I'm persuasive. Again, I think  
12 that people listen to me because I am speaking -- I am  
13 speaking, you know, to them on a level that they  
14 understand. I don't speak above people. I don't try and  
15 use really big words that nobody's going to understand.

16 And I try and pattern my, you know, speech or  
17 what I'm going to say on the type of individuals that I'm  
18 speaking to.

19 Speaking to a group of teenage kids, it's going  
20 to be a lot different than speaking to, you know, a group  
21 of parents at a PTA meeting.

22 The depth of my experience is, you know, working  
23 on boards, and groups and like that, where I have had to  
24 address the parents or the group, itself.

25 When my oldest son was an infant, we owned a

1 video arcade and the local school wasn't really keen on  
2 having a video arcade down the street, so I went in and  
3 spoke and, you know, as a representative of our video  
4 arcade went in and spoke to all of the parents of the  
5 children who went to the school, and told them that, you  
6 know, we would have rules. If they didn't want their  
7 children to come, that was fine, let us know, they  
8 wouldn't be allowed in, and like that.

9           And we had a very successful relationship and a  
10 very good relationship with the community, and with the  
11 parents of the school children. And I think, I believe  
12 it's because even at the time I was very young, you know,  
13 in my early twenties, I think that they -- that I'm  
14 believable in what I say because I'm sincere in what I  
15 saw, and I think that's what makes me effective when I  
16 speak to people.

17           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: The video arcade business  
18 that you owned, how did you identify the individuals that  
19 you needed to talk to and how did you get their input?

20           We went to -- I went to the school, they were  
21 kind enough, we printed up a flier saying, you know, we'd  
22 like to open a video arcade within this area, and where it  
23 would be located. We'd like to have a meeting -- and this  
24 was back in the early eighties.

25           You know, we'd like to have a meeting. You

1 know, if you'd like to come we want to hear your concerns,  
2 we want to hear what you have to say and, you know, how we  
3 can make this work with you guys.

4 Because video arcades at the time kind of had a  
5 bad reputation as being hangouts, you know, during the day  
6 for kids skipping school.

7 So, the parents had -- it was a full auditorium  
8 and the parents were very interested. And, you know, we  
9 listened to what they had to say, they voiced their  
10 concerns and we told them how we would take care of each  
11 of their concerns.

12 And as I said, it was a very successful  
13 relationship and the parents actually really liked our  
14 arcade thing there.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You mentioned that you were  
16 on various boards and you were also a team mom, and living  
17 overseas. How did all your volunteer activities prepare  
18 you for the Redistricting Commission?

19 MS. ARMENTA: Oh, I mean, that's just invaluable  
20 experience because any time you're on a board that's made  
21 up of random people, that are, you know, joined as  
22 something as random as their kids go to the same school,  
23 you are dealing with people of many differing opinions,  
24 many differing cultures, many differing priorities in the  
25 way they want their children raised, and the things that



1 they think are important.

2           You have a lot of parents who feel that, you  
3 know, their child is maybe more deserving of recognition  
4 than other kids, and you need to deal with that kind of  
5 thing and, you know, diffuse it and kind of say, you know,  
6 everybody's -- everybody's pretty equal and everybody  
7 deserves, you know, and make them feel good while still  
8 holding the line for whatever you're doing.

9           Having met all these people, I mean, in all  
10 different areas of the country and with all different  
11 perspectives, and priorities, and histories, and the like  
12 has been a fascinating experience and has taught me to  
13 deal with people of all different -- because I can relate  
14 to them on some level, similarly to someone I've met in  
15 the past. It's all very fascinating and interesting to  
16 me. And I think that the fact that I'm interested in  
17 people, they understand that. And I think that my  
18 experiences serve me very well and would serve me very  
19 well on this Redistricting Commission.

20           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you, that was my last  
21 question.

22           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

23           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

24           MS. ARMENTA: Good afternoon.

25           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned earlier, in

1 one or your responses, I believe, to Nasir's question  
2 about how you want to keep communities intact, and you  
3 mentioned voter dilution. And I was wondering if you can  
4 elaborate on that meaning?

5 MS. ARMENTA: Voter dilution, what I got, you  
6 know, from the research I've done and, you know, prior to  
7 this Redistricting Commission process, you know, I'd never  
8 really considered voter dilution.

9 But if you have a city area and you have a  
10 farming area, and you make your district, combine both of  
11 them, the sparsely populated farming area's votes are  
12 pretty much void. I mean, they're diluted by the densely  
13 populated city interests that would override them, out  
14 vote them.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, thank you.

16 What factors constitute a community of interest  
17 in your mind?

18 MS. ARMENTA: Like concerns and problems, things  
19 that are important to them that they share with neighbors,  
20 and their community in general.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And how does this impact --  
22 and I know you've used communities of interest in your  
23 responses today, but what is the true significance to you  
24 of the power of including communities of interest in your  
25 decision making, as you draw the lines throughout the

1 State?

2 MS. ARMENTA: I think because, you know, in the  
3 histories that I've read and the information that I've  
4 read, it's been a -- you know, a practice, or it's  
5 happened, where in order to make sure that a community of  
6 interest doesn't have voting power as a group, as a  
7 community, they've been divided between districts.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

9 MS. ARMENTA: And then combined with, you know,  
10 half of them go with one district that has more people  
11 that have different interests than they do, and the other  
12 half goes with another district that has, you know, more  
13 people of different interests than they do.

14 And so, what's important to them and what  
15 they're concerned about becomes a non-issue because  
16 there's nothing that they can do about it, because they  
17 can't band together to vote the people in that they would  
18 like to represent their interests.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Where you live right now,  
20 do you feel like you've achieved fair representation?

21 MS. ARMENTA: Where I live right now?

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah, in your district?

23 MS. ARMENTA: I think that our district is  
24 fairly large. So, I think that like the people around me,  
25 we're fairly intact. You know, like any concerns and

1 things that we would have as a community, I think we're  
2 pretty intact where we are. I don't think we have like  
3 any kind of line there that breaks us up or anything.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What are your interests,  
5 shared interests in your district, that you're aware of?

6 MS. ARMENTA: That I'm aware of?

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

8 MS. ARMENTA: Well, I think I've kind of touched  
9 on, you know, I know that people are concerned with the  
10 utilities, and the water, the cost of the water, this  
11 metered water issue, and all of that kind of thing.

12 The schools, definitely.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mean the water issue in  
14 terms of Sacramento becoming metering or --

15 MS. ARMENTA: Yeah.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

17 MS. ARMENTA: I think that, you know, that's a  
18 big issue for people, at least where I live because, you  
19 know, we've really seen a jump in our water bill since  
20 they became metered, and they continue to go up.

21 The schools are definitely a concern, what's  
22 going on with the schools. We're within the Sacramento  
23 City Unified School District and so that's, you know,  
24 that's a very big concern for the people that I know and  
25 associate with, at least as far as school goes and in my

1 neighborhood.

2           You know, we have some young people in our  
3 neighborhood and some older, retired people, and they're  
4 probably not as concerned with the schools as I am.

5           Except for the fact that the young people go to  
6 Sac State and I know they're definitely concerned with the  
7 things that are going on, you know, with education, and  
8 money, and financing, and that kind of thing.

9           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you think the State's  
10 redistricting effort can help address some of these  
11 concerns, like the political preferences of communities  
12 like this?

13           MS. ARMENTA: I do. I mean, maybe not  
14 necessarily mine, you know, because I think that we are  
15 fairly intact. But in some communities I definitely do  
16 because it's not that, you know, having a community of  
17 interest together makes it all better and all of the  
18 sudden -- but it allows you, as a community, to be able to  
19 vote for the person that will help you make those changes.

20           And so, I very much believe that keeping them  
21 together helps them deal with their concerns and their  
22 needs, you know, in kind of a bigger picture sense.

23           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned earlier that  
24 everybody calls you to problem solve.

25           MS. ARMENTA: Yes, they do.

1                   PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you give me a few  
2 examples about what kind of problems they call you about  
3 and how you solve them?

4                   MS. ARMENTA: Oh, it doesn't matter. They can  
5 call me -- a girlfriend of mine, who had a State job for a  
6 while and she -- I mean, she had it for like 12 years and  
7 then she stopped worked, and she's been off, and now she's  
8 ready to go back into the workforce, and so she calls and,  
9 you know, wants help with her resume, wants what's the  
10 best way to do that.

11                  Her mother, who is a Japanese American, she's  
12 originally from Japan, wants to open a business, so she  
13 calls, okay, what do we need to do to go about writing a  
14 business plan, what do we need to do to -- and they come  
15 over and we go over, you know, everything with them. You  
16 know, and I'll talk with them and walk them through these  
17 things.

18                  My daughter's goddaughter, who thinks I'm her  
19 grandma, she calls me grandma, her mother, my daughter's  
20 friend, will call me every time something's wrong with  
21 Leah. And her mother is actually a nurse, but she calls  
22 me anyway and says, you know, what do I need to do about  
23 this, or how do I handle this or whatever.

24                  The coach of my son's rugby team, if he needs  
25 something for the team he calls me and says, you know,

1 this is what I need, can you get this done, can you do  
2 this thing?

3 The coach from the select rugby team showed up  
4 at a ruby game last year, or last season, you know, I'm  
5 standing there, I look up, he's standing there and he  
6 says -- and I said, oh, are you scouting players, and he  
7 said, no, I came to make sure you're going to be my team  
8 mum again this year.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The team mom?

10 MS. ARMENTA: Yeah. Well, he says mum, he's  
11 English. Because he had never had anybody who was able to  
12 make the team go like I did. And, in fact, has offered me  
13 that position indefinitely, for as long as I'd like to do  
14 it.

15 So, I -- I can get things done and all of my  
16 acquaintances and friends know that and will call, and  
17 either ask how to do something, or if I can do something  
18 or, you know, to get advice on something.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

20 Can you describe for me the most complex task or  
21 assignment you ever performed?

22 MS. ARMENTA: Well, being a mom definitely falls  
23 under that umbrella. But aside from that because there  
24 are so many people who are, obviously, very capable of  
25 that, the select rugby team, definitely, that was -- when

1 I went into that two years ago, was quite a challenge. I  
2 mean, getting documents from 25 to 30 boys -- I mean,  
3 either birth certificates, their school ID. I mean,  
4 there's documents that are required for tournaments.

5 Getting them all, getting all of these boys to  
6 do whatever it is that we've decided to do for  
7 fundraising, getting them all to book travel, getting them  
8 all -- making sure they're all to the airport or to the  
9 tournament because, obviously, we drove to like Treasure  
10 Island.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Treasure Island, is that  
12 what you said?

13 MS. ARMENTA: Yeah.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, okay.

15 MS. ARMENTA: We drove to Treasure Island, but  
16 in flying to Denver.

17 And all of the things that I had to do with  
18 that, where I was dealing with not just my kids which, you  
19 know, that's hard enough to get them to pack and whatnot,  
20 but I had to do this with 25 teenage boys, who don't  
21 always take everything home to their parents, and who  
22 don't always actually mention to their parents that we  
23 would be leaving for Denver.

24 So, I had to be able to communicate with the  
25 parents directly, as well as with the guys.



1           And it was a very complex, you know, concept to  
2 begin with. But like I said, you know, I broke it down  
3 into tasks and was able to manage them.

4           Getting them there in Denver, keeping them all  
5 together, making sure they're where they were supposed to  
6 be. And we actually fed them, ourselves, because we  
7 didn't want them just going off and eating before a  
8 tournament.

9           So, I would go out and I would get the food, I  
10 would arrange -- I would set it up for them in the  
11 morning, you know, and then they all had to be taken to  
12 the field and they -- I mean, it's -- it's like moving an  
13 army, you know, and teenage boys are --

14           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, you were the only one  
15 that did all this?

16           MS. ARMENTA: Yes, I did -- well, I had,  
17 obviously, parents, I would have them help. But when we  
18 went to tournament and stuff, I did all that. I would  
19 say, you know, to the parents that actually went with us,  
20 you know, I need some help doing breakfast in the morning,  
21 you know, can you -- I made sure all the parents could  
22 drive, you know, put kids in their car and drive them to  
23 the tournament and whatnot, and like that. But the actual  
24 coordination and getting the things done, I did it all.

25           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me what

1 appreciation for -- thank you for the response.

2 Can you tell me, what does appreciation for  
3 California's diversity mean to you?

4 MS. ARMENTA: It means that I understand and  
5 that I have a respect for the fact that there is great  
6 diversity in California. In the areas, in the climates,  
7 you know, we're experiencing our very diverse weather  
8 today, in personalities, in interests, in groups of people  
9 that, you know, gather together in certain areas. It's a  
10 very free-thinking State and that leads to, you know, even  
11 more diversity than, you know, maybe they have in Iowa or  
12 something. Just it's amazing. It's amazing the amount of  
13 interest, it's amazing the amount of, you know, different  
14 social groups.

15 And even just here in California, the different  
16 geography, the different, you know, zones where you can go  
17 from really nice, pretty mountains, to a desert to, you  
18 know, beautiful redwoods. And diversity is all of that  
19 kind of thing.

20 And it's just I think the appreciation part is  
21 just having a respect for and understanding of the  
22 different types of diversity that are out there and, you  
23 know, as far as the people and the State, itself.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why is appreciation for  
25 California's diversity so important to redrawing the

1 lines?

2 MS. ARMENTA: Because it's such a part of  
3 California, I think. I mean, the fact that it is so  
4 diverse here.

5 I think it's really important because it means,  
6 you know, having a respect for these things and  
7 understanding that there are different groups of people,  
8 and that there are different interests, different  
9 considerations for different areas.

10 And I think in California, in particular, it's  
11 just really important to understand that everybody's not  
12 the same and that every area is not the same, and that  
13 every interest in every area, you know, is not the same.  
14 And that these things are important to those people. When  
15 you speak to one person, their interests are the things  
16 that's most important to them.

17 And I think that you need to be able to  
18 understand and appreciate that, and that they know that  
19 you do.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why is appreciation for  
21 California's diversity so important to complying with  
22 state and federal law, in your mind?

23 MS. ARMENTA: In my mind?

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

25 MS. ARMENTA: Because it -- a lot of state and

1 federal law is, you know, based upon not discriminating  
2 against different groups, whether it be racial, religion,  
3 you know, sexual orientation, or whatever it is. So much  
4 law is based on not discriminating against that, that I  
5 think that that's why it's so important to respect that as  
6 far as redistricting is concerned.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned in your  
8 application that as a minority you have experienced some  
9 of the adverse situations that often accompany being a  
10 minority.

11 Can you elaborate on that?

12 MS. ARMENTA: Yes, I can.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

14 MS. ARMENTA: What I remember when I was small,  
15 I think I mentioned earlier that my mother was from a very  
16 small town in Arkansas, and we would go to visit. And we  
17 were there one time and they literally have a general  
18 store in town and there are, actually, older gentlemen  
19 playing checkers in the front. I'm not making this up.

20 And my father and I went in there, and my father  
21 is darker than I am, and in the summertime we're both  
22 quite dark, particularly the south. And we went into the  
23 store to buy some things for my mother's uncle, and as we  
24 were paying for the things I noticed that everyone had  
25 stopped playing, doing whatever they were doing, and they

1 were kind of all around us and they were like, well, we  
2 haven't seen you around these parts before.

3 And I'm like, well, we're just here visiting  
4 Uncle Troy. And they're like Troy, Troy Devaser  
5 (phonetic), you're visiting Troy? Well, who's your mama.  
6 So I told them and then it was all okay.

7 But it was like very nerve wracking at first  
8 because we were different looking and we weren't kind of  
9 the norm there.

10 When I lived in Washington D.C., as a teenager,  
11 my father was stationed at Andrews, and when he retired,  
12 we moved to a very small town in Washington. There were  
13 actually friends of mine, in that small town, who were not  
14 allowed to go anywhere or do anything with me because I  
15 was Mexican.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. Thank you.

17 What similarities and differences do you foresee  
18 working on the Commissioner versus your experience working  
19 as an accounting manager?

20 MS. ARMENTA: What similarities and differences?

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum, that you foresee?

22 MS. ARMENTA: Well, as far as the similarities,  
23 it's -- you know, it's still running an office, it's still  
24 running a staff, it's still accomplishing deadlines and  
25 taking care of, you know, that which needs to be taken

1 care of.

2 Obviously, you know, there's the budget to be  
3 concerned with, there are schedules to be concerned with,  
4 and all of the kind of thing that you deal with in normal,  
5 everyday life.

6 The differences are that it's vastly more  
7 interesting to go around to do redistricting, and talk to  
8 people, and everything, than just work in an office and  
9 manage an office.

10 But it's also, I mean, just such a larger  
11 concept that I would do in every day work, you know, to be  
12 a part of something this big.

13 It's going out and meeting people, and talking  
14 with people is not something that, you know, normally as a  
15 bookkeeper or an office manager I do a lot of. So, that's  
16 very different.

17 And I don't generally have to work with anybody  
18 that's on the same level as me, I'm usually the one in  
19 charge, you know, at least of my department or my staff.  
20 So, that's very interesting, too, and that's a very  
21 exciting prospect.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What inspired you to apply  
23 for a seat on the Commission?

24 MS. ARMENTA: Well, I actually heard the ad on  
25 the radio and I was like -- I heard it several times and it

1 didn't click at first and then I was like, wow, they're  
2 just calling for like anybody to do this, can you really  
3 do this?

4 And so, then I looked it up on "We Draw the  
5 Lines," and I was like, okay, well, you know, I can give  
6 them my name and my basic information. And then, when I  
7 was asked for the supplemental application I was like,  
8 wow, this is like really fascinating. This is a lot of  
9 work, but this is really fascinating.

10 My uncle, originally, submitted one of the  
11 applications. But when you guys sent the supplemental one  
12 he said, nope, I'm not interested in that much work, I'm  
13 retired.

14 But just it was fascinating. I mean, and he  
15 whole process has been fascinating. Not only have I  
16 learned a great deal about California, about the history  
17 of this, you know, I had really not too much knowledge of  
18 the Voting Rights Act of 1965, at all prior to this.

19 And so, it's been fascinating and I love to  
20 learn, I just really do. And so, it's been a challenge  
21 and just very exciting.

22 And to even be this far along is just -- it's  
23 unbelievable to me because it's just such an exciting and,  
24 you know, fascinating process to me and I'm very  
25 interested in where this goes and how this all works out.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

2 I think that's it for me for now. Thank you.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Follow-up questions,

4 Panelists?

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Not at this point.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I can wait for you.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. Hi there.

8 MS. ARMENTA: Hi.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You worked at Revell

10 Communications?

11 MS. ARMENTA: I did.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And what do they do?

13 MS. ARMENTA: He is public relations/public

14 affairs.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And are any of the -- are

16 any of his clients members of the Legislature or --

17 MS. ARMENTA: No, he only -- well, during most

18 of the time I worked for him he only had one client.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Not affiliated with state

20 government?

21 MS. ARMENTA: No, a fireworks manufacturer and

22 distributor.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And your partner works

24 for Forsgren --

25 MS. ARMENTA: Forsgren.



1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Forsgren Associates.

2 What is that -- I mean, what does he do?

3 MS. ARMENTA: It's a professional engineering  
4 consulting firm.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. What was it like  
6 for you to live next door to Governor George Wallace, in  
7 Alabama?

8 MS. ARMENTA: He was a very interesting man.  
9 Mostly, I was a kid, so we had a great deal of fun. The  
10 son that was closer to my age was named Josh, and we would  
11 go stand in line in front of the mansion, with the people  
12 going to take a tour, and we'd go on the tour. Well, when  
13 we got to the grand staircase that was roped off, you  
14 know, everybody goes up to the end of the rope and they  
15 look up at the -- you know, because that's where the  
16 family lives, and they would look up at the big  
17 chandelier. And Josh and I would jump over the rope and  
18 run up the stairs, and people would be like, oh, my God,  
19 you know, and wait for the guards to shoot us. Only that  
20 never happened because the guards would just stand there  
21 and laugh.

22 There was a very -- in retrospect, a very unique  
23 experience. And at the time it just seemed very ordinary  
24 and like everybody lived next door to the governor and  
25 played over at the mansion.

1                   MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I've heard you talk a  
2 little bit about your own personal experience of being a  
3 minority, and being mistreated, essentially. And I also  
4 read in your application about your grandparents, and the  
5 remarkable story of their coming here, and your  
6 grandmother's sacrifice after your grandfather passed  
7 away.

8                   And so, I'm just wondering what has all of that  
9 cumulatively taught you about the life experience of  
10 immigrants and minorities in California?

11                  MS. ARMENTA: Oh, it taught me a great deal  
12 about that. My grandmother and my grandfather were  
13 amazing people. My grandfather did not come here until he  
14 was a little bit older, closer to 30. And the way that  
15 they were treated at times was just -- is astounding,  
16 particularly considering the amount of work that they did,  
17 you know, and the contribution that they made to being  
18 citizens of this country.

19                  And so, it taught me -- it's interesting,  
20 because it taught me on the one hand, I was extremely  
21 proud of being Mexican, I mean, when I was little, growing  
22 up and stuff.

23                  But at the same time, we were brought up that we  
24 were American, you know, and our country always came  
25 force, you know, I'm an Air Force brat, and that kind of

1    thing.

2                   So, I was never -- it was a very interesting  
3   family because, you know, when I meet a lot of minorities  
4   now, their heritage as being Latino, you know, takes  
5   precedence over their American heritage, and everything,  
6   and I was taught the opposite.

7                   But I truly appreciate what my grandparents went  
8   through. What my grandmother did each day would kill me  
9   pretty much. I think, especially when she ran the takeout  
10  Mexican food from her house, the health inspectors were  
11  there all the time, and she had to clean her kitchen top  
12  to bottom with bleach like three times a day, and take  
13  care of her kids, and cook all this food that she was  
14  selling to people.

15                  And I don't know if you've ever made tortillas?  
16  That is not easy, okay, they are really hard and she made  
17  hundreds of them a day.

18                  I just -- I have a real appreciation for people  
19  who come to this country and are making a life here  
20  because -- because it's not easy. I mean, it was very  
21  difficult for my grandparents and they did an outstanding  
22  job.

23                  VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, why do you think that  
24  some minorities affiliate more with their minority status  
25  versus their American status?

1 MS. ARMENTA: I think it's a different time. I  
2 think that for my grandfather, he came here and he spoke  
3 very broken English. He was the "Jefe" for picking, he  
4 would bring the crews in and the farmer would pay him, so  
5 they were a little bit better off than other people.

6 But he was very proud of the fact that his  
7 children were born in the United States and, in fact,  
8 would not let them speak Spanish because he didn't want  
9 them to be stigmatized by having an accent.

10 When he died my grandmother, just out of habit  
11 and the fact that she was extremely busy, went back to  
12 speaking Spanish a lot. But that was a really different  
13 time, you know.

14 I think that we put a lot more emphasis, now, on  
15 our heritage, particularly if it's one that we're very  
16 proud of.

17 I think that I am, I'm very proud of being  
18 Mexican, I'm very proud of my ancestry.

19 But now it's -- now, it's like in America  
20 there's more of an acceptance in the culture to go ahead  
21 as -- to come here as an immigrant and bring your culture  
22 intact with you, because there are others who are like you  
23 and that speak your language, share the same customs that  
24 you do.

25 When I was a young, you know, person with kids

1 at home, I couldn't find cilantro in grocery stores. Now,  
2 I can find it everywhere. I used to have to go to the  
3 Asian market to find cilantro to make salsa with. But,  
4 you know, now it's everywhere because there's so much more  
5 of people's cultures within our everyday life, now, that  
6 it's just, I think, a lot easier to move your culture here  
7 with you.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You got a letter of  
9 recommendation from your partner?

10 MS. ARMENTA: I did get one. He's my biggest  
11 fan, he truly is.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Is that why he submitted  
13 one or did you ask him to?

14 MS. ARMENTA: Actually, he asked me if he could,  
15 if he could be one of them. I've known him since my  
16 father was stationed at Andrews Air Force Base, since I  
17 was 14 years old. So, he's been a big fan of mine. And  
18 I've a big fan of his, I must admit. He's a really great  
19 guy.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you think that the  
21 Commission will be able to preserve every community of  
22 interest?

23 MS. ARMENTA: No. And I think that's provided  
24 for, though, in the way that the mandates and the laws are  
25 written to say that where it's practical and possible, and

1 to the best of our ability to do that. You know, we can  
2 do the best that we can.

3           You know, there's a hope that in looking at  
4 these districts and stuff, you know, that we can take  
5 communities of interests, maybe that can't be preserved,  
6 but maybe they can form coalitions with other communities  
7 of interest that are still within their -- you know,  
8 within their area, thus preserving their voting base. And  
9 that's provided for, I don't know in the Voters Rights  
10 Act, or it was a decision that was handed down by the  
11 Supreme Court or something, saying that was always a  
12 possibility, too.

13           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I have no further  
14 questions.

15           Panelists?

16           CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have any questions.

17           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You asked my question.

18           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I store your question?

19           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

20           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have some time on the  
21 clock, about 13 minutes, if you'd like to make a closing  
22 statement.

23           MS. ARMENTA: I would like to make a closing  
24 statement of sorts. You guys are probably like, please,  
25 have you not spoken enough?

1           I just wanted to say that no matter what happens  
2 with this Commission, this has been just a fascinating  
3 process.

4           And everything that I say in here is not just to  
5 make sure that you guys really like me, but I really mean  
6 it. I'm excited by this, I'm excited to see what happens  
7 to it and I do hope that it brings a sense of pride to the  
8 citizens of California. I do hope that it goes from  
9 California and spreads throughout the nation as such a  
10 great idea.

11           I'm excited about the prospect of -- personally,  
12 but if I'm not on the Commission not personally, be seeing  
13 people education, seeing people shown, given information  
14 about this Commission, what it's doing and how it was  
15 created and how it was formed.

16           I've been so impressed with this whole process  
17 and I was -- I had mentioned to the secretary over here,  
18 Diane -- I don't remember your last name, though, sorry.

19           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's on the website.

20           MS. ARMENTA: Hamel or -- okay, good, Ms. Hamel.  
21 That I was speaking to a friend in Washington and I was  
22 kind of explaining this to her and I was telling her how  
23 impressive this is that all of this has been done without  
24 a precedent, and without a rulebook or a -- I mean,  
25 without a map or an instruction booklet, and it's just

1     fabulous. I mean, it's been such a wonderful process.

2                 I mean, there's a lot of writing and I have  
3     writer's cramp, but it's been virtually pain free and fun  
4     to do.

5                 Yeah, it was a lot of prep, it was a lot of  
6     work, it was a lot of writing, and a lot of thinking,  
7     which is also fabulous. The fact that I have to think  
8     about things about myself, I have to understand my  
9     shortcomings and how I can overcome those and, you know, I  
10    mean, I've even thought about how would I get information  
11    out to people?

12                You know how would I run or set up a meeting in  
13    a community and get people to come to it, and what would I  
14    want to say to them when they were there?

15                You know, to me it's wonderful to be put in a  
16    position to think those things, to have something that,  
17    you know, that is interesting and exciting and causes me  
18    to look at the world around me and to examine myself as  
19    well.

20                And so, I applaud you guys. I told Ms. Hamel as  
21    well, earlier, that I wouldn't want to be -- have your  
22    job, because I don't know how you did it, honestly I  
23    don't. It's very impressive, the work that you guys have  
24    done and it would probably have killed me, like doing the  
25    work my grandmother had to do.



1           You guys, as well, I mean it's been a lot of  
2 hours and stuff. And I truly appreciate the opportunity  
3 to even say this stuff and even let you know that this is,  
4 you know, truly what I mean. And I appreciate the  
5 opportunity to think about these things.

6           And I think this Commission will be a very, very  
7 good thing. I'm really looking forward to these maps  
8 being redrawn and just to see how this whole Commission  
9 comes out, it's kind of like an exciting story that I  
10 don't have the last page to, yet, but I'm looking forward  
11 to it. Kind of a Harry Potter type of thing here, with  
12 the Commission.

13           I think I had, actually, a question. Is that  
14 a -- can I ask you a question? I don't know how this  
15 works, I don't want to get, you know, in trouble?

16           There was some stuff and maybe counsel will know  
17 this more than you, the review panel.

18           There was some stuff that I was reading about  
19 and I mentioned in my responses about in the past people  
20 aren't really happy with the district lines, necessarily,  
21 and they file suits. How is the Commission responsible?  
22 I mean, are they the sole defenders?

23           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Correct.

24           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CUMMINGS: Okay. So, it will  
25 be up to the Commission to have counsel --

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Handle litigation. So,  
2 it will be a ten-year gig.

3 MS. ARMENTA: No, I knew it was a ten-year gig,  
4 but I was really curious about if there was any -- like  
5 the Secretary of State came out and defended or if it was  
6 strictly the --

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You'll hire counsel.

8 M. ARMENTA: Okay. But it's as a group?

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You could be named  
10 individually, although for legal reasons I can't imagine  
11 why that would necessarily hold up, unless something  
12 really irregular transpired.

13 But the Commission, I assume, would be sued as a  
14 group, I assume so.

15 MS. ARMENTA: Okay. Well, yeah, I was just  
16 curious about that because I am --

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Hope not.

18 MS. ARMENTA: Well, but you know it's going to  
19 happen. I mean, they may not get very far with their  
20 suit, but since it has happened every other time, it's not  
21 likely that everybody's going to go wow, is that a great  
22 map.

23 (Laughter.)

24 MS. ARMENTA: With respect -- let me see. Oh,  
25 okay. With respect to section five of -- the

1 Constitution, the State Constitution --

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: The Voting Rights Act.

3 MS. ARMENTA: -- where the -- we had to be pre-  
4 cleared to have the Commission, had a pre-clearance for  
5 that.

6 Will the certified maps need to be pre-cleared?

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Yes.

8 MS. ARMENTA: Okay, so they will go first to the  
9 court and then to the Secretary of State?

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I'm not certain the  
11 order. Okay.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I assume the Commission  
13 would want to attempt a pre-clearance through the DOJ,  
14 first, but I really don't know. I really don't know the  
15 order.

16 MS. ARMENTA: Okay, I was just curious. Again,  
17 things that -- you know, as you're reading this stuff you  
18 go, oh, what about, and that's a question, and then you go  
19 to look it up and you can't find anything on it.

20 After the Commission is seated, who governs it?

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You'll have to elect a  
22 chair and vice chair.

23 MS. ARMENTA: Okay, so the Commission is just  
24 kind of a self-controlling entity, there's no --

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Correct.

1 MS. ARMENTA: Nobody's over it.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You have the authority to  
3 hire staff. You may choose to hire an executive director.  
4 I think the law specifically provides for that.

5 MS. ARMENTA: Oh, okay.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, assuming that the  
7 executive director functions like many other executive  
8 officers, or executive directors of other state  
9 organizations, boards and commissions, it's highly likely  
10 that much of the day-to-day operations would be delegated  
11 to that officer.

12 MS. ARMENTA: Okay.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And that's really the  
14 Commission's call.

15 MS. ARMENTA: Okay. Yeah, I was curious about  
16 that.

17 I don't think that I have any other questions.  
18 Gosh, I appreciate you answering those because I was like  
19 I don't even know if I can ask questions, but I think I'll  
20 try.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You can ask questions,  
22 you may not get the answer.

23 (Laughter.)

24 MS. ARMENTA: Well, I have more information than  
25 I did before I asked that question.

1                   Again, thank you so much, I have -- this has  
2   been fun. I know when I came in here I was probably  
3   shaking and nervous, but you guys are extremely pleasant  
4   to deal with and now I feel completely relaxed and will  
5   probably just go home and fall into my sofa.

6                   PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thanks.

7                   MS. ARMENTA: Thanks so much.

8                   VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

9                   MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much for  
10 coming to see us.

11                   Let's recess until 9:14 tomorrow.

12                                   (Recess at 5:53 p.m.)